WHAT IS RELIGION ?

COUNT LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

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WHAT IS RELIGION?

PORTRAIT OF TOLSTOÏ.

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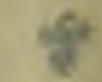
WHAT IS RELIGION?

AND OTHER NEW ARTICLES AND LETTERS

BY

LEO N. TOLSTOI

TRANSLATED BY [illegible]



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AND OTHER NEW ARTICLES AND LETTERS

BY

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

TRANSLATED BY V. TCHERTKOFF AND A. C. FIFIELD

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WHAT IS RELIGION?

AND WHAT IS ITS ESSENCE?

(*February*, 1902)

CHAPTER I

ALWAYS in all human societies, at a certain period of their existence a time comes when their religion begins to diverge from its fundamental meaning, then diverges more and more, loses this fundamental meaning, and finally crystallizes into permanently established forms; — when its influence upon the life of men grows weaker and weaker.

At such periods, the educated minority, though no longer believing in the existing religious teaching, still pretend to believe, finding this religion necessary for holding the masses in the established order of life; whilst the masses, although adhering by the force of inertia to the established religion, are no longer guided in their lives by religious demands, but only by popular customs and state laws.

So it has been, many times, in many human communities. But what is now taking place in our Christian Society has never before occurred. It has never occurred before that the ruling and more educated minority, which has the chief influence on the masses, not only disbelieved in the existing religion, but was certain that in its time religion was no longer necessary at all, and that it taught those who doubted the truth of the accepted faith not some other, more rational and comprehensible religion than that existing, but even

persuaded them that religion in general had outlived its time, and had become not only a useless but even a harmful organ of social life, something like the appendix of the cæcum in the human organism.

Religion is studied by this class of men not as something which we know through our inner experience, but as an external phenomenon, a disease as it were to which some people are subject, and which we can understand only in its external symptoms.

Religion, according to some of these men, has sprung from the spiritualization of all the phenomena of nature (animism). According to others, from the idea of the possibility of communicating with departed ancestors. According to others again, from the fear of the powers of nature. And as science has proved — the scientists of our day further argue — that trees and stone cannot be animated, and deceased ancestors are no longer conscious of what the living do, and the phenomena of nature are explicable by natural causes, — therefore the necessity for religion and for all those restraints which people impose upon themselves as the result of religious beliefs has disappeared. In the opinion of scientists there once existed a period of unenlightenment — the religious period. This was outlived by mankind long ago, but occasional atavistic symptoms remain. Then there came the metaphysical period, which also has been outlived. And now, we, the enlightened generations, live in the scientific period, — of positive science, — which replaces religion and leads mankind to a lofty degree of development which it could never have attained whilst it submitted to superstitious religious teaching.

At the beginning of 1901 the celebrated French scientist Berthelot uttered a speech (*Revue de Paris*, January, 1901), in which he communicated to his audience the idea that the age of religion had passed, and that it must now be replaced by science. I cite this speech because it is the first to my hand and because it was uttered in the capital of the cultured world by a universally recognized scientist. But the same idea has been

expressed continually and everywhere from philosophical treatises down to newspaper articles.

Mons. Berthelot says in this speech that there were formerly two principles which moved mankind, Force and Religion. These motive powers have become unnecessary now, because their place has been taken by science. By science Mons. Berthelot evidently implies (as all men who believe in it do) a science which embraces the whole sphere of human knowledge, each branch classified according to the degree of its importance, and the whole harmoniously bound together. A science possessing such methods that all the data it discovers present one unquestionable truth. But such a science does not exist, as a matter of fact. What is called science to-day consists of a haphazard heap of information, united by nothing, often utterly unnecessary, and not only failing to present one unquestionable truth, but as often as not containing the grossest errors to-day put forward as truths, and to-morrow overthrown. It is evident, therefore, that the very thing which in Mons. Berthelot's opinion is to replace religion, does not exist. And therefore the assertion of Mons. Berthelot and those who agree with him, that science will replace religion, is entirely arbitrary, and is founded upon an unjustifiable belief in an Infallible Science, exactly resembling the belief in an Infallible Church.

And yet people who call themselves and are regarded as scientists are quite certain that already there exists a science which must and can replace religion, and even has replaced it.

"Religion has outlived its day; to believe in anything except science is ignorance. Science will arrange all that is necessary, and one should be guided in life by science alone." So think and say both the scientists themselves and the crowd, which, although very far from being scientific, yet believes the scientists and together with them asserts that religion is an outlived superstition and that our life should be guided only by science, — that is, in reality, by nothing, because science, according to its own acknowledged definition as

the investigation of everything that exists, cannot furnish any guidance for man's life.

CHAPTER II

The scientists of our times have decided that religion is unnecessary and that science will replace or already has replaced it; and yet, now as before, no human society or rational man ever has lived or can live without religion. (I say "rational" man, because an irrational man can live as an animal, without religion.) A rational man cannot live without religion, because religion alone gives the rational man the necessary guidance as to what he should do, and what he should do first and what next. A rational man cannot live without religion precisely because reason is an element of his nature. Every animal is guided in its actions — except those to which it is attracted by the direct demands of its desires — by consideration about the immediate results of its actions. Having considered these results by the aid of those means of comprehension which it possesses, the animal conforms its actions to the results, and always acts under the influence of these considerations in one and the same way, without wavering. Thus, for instance, a bee flies in search of honey and brings it home into its hive because in winter it will require the food it has collected for itself and the young; and beyond these considerations it knows nothing and is unable to know anything. A bird acts in the same way when it makes its nest, or migrates from the north to the south and *vice versa*. And so also does every animal when it commits any act, not from a direct immediate necessity, but under the influence of considerations about expected results.

But it is not so with man. The difference between a man and an animal consists in this, that the perceptive faculties in the animal are limited by what we call instinct, whereas reason is the essential perceptive faculty of man.

A bee collecting its food can have no doubts about

the rightness or wrongness of what it is doing. But a man gathering in the harvest cannot but reflect whether he is destroying for the future the growth of the wheat or fruit, and whether by thus gathering he is not depriving his neighbor of his food. He also cannot but think of the future of the children whom he feeds; and of many other things. The most important questions of conduct in life cannot be solved definitely by a rational man, precisely because of the multitude of results which he cannot help seeing. Every rational man feels, if he does not know, that in the most important affairs of life he cannot be guided either by the impulse of personal feelings or by considerations of the immediate results of his activity, because he sees too many different results, and often contradictory ones; results, that is, which with equal probability can be either beneficent or harmful, both to himself and to others.

There is a legend about an angel who descended to earth into a God-fearing family and killed a child in its cradle; when asked why he had done this, he replied that the child would have become a great malefactor and would have brought misery to its family.

But not only in the question, Which human life is useful, useless, or harmful? — not one of the most important questions of life can be solved, for a rational man, by considerations about immediate relations and results. A rational man cannot be content with the considerations which direct the actions of animals. Man may regard himself as an animal amongst animals, living from day to day; he may regard himself as a member of a family or of a society or of a nation living from century to century; he may, and even necessarily must (because his reason irresistibly attracts him to this), regard himself as a part of the whole Infinite Universe existing infinitely. And therefore a rational man is obliged to and always does do, in relation to the infinitely small circumstances of life which influence his actions, what in mathematics is called integration, that is, besides his relations to his immediate circumstances,

he must establish his relation to the whole universe, infinite in time and space, and conceived as a whole. And such an establishment by man of his relation to that whole of which he feels himself a part and from which he obtains guidance for his actions, is precisely what was and is called Religion. And therefore religion always has been and cannot cease to be an indispensable and permanent condition of the life of a rational man and of rational humanity.

CHAPTER III

And it was in this way that the men who were not bereft of the capacity of the higher (that is, the religious) consciousness, which distinguishes man from the animal, always understood religion. The oldest and most common definition of religion, from which the word itself is derived (*religio — religare*, to bind back), is that religion is a connection between man and God. "*Les obligations de l'homme envers Dieu, voilà la religion*" ("Man's obligations toward God; that is religion"), says Vovenargue. A similar meaning is attached to religion by Schleiermacher and Fehrbach, who recognize as the foundation of religion man's consciousness of his dependence on God. "*La religion est une affaire entre chaque homme et Dieu.*"— Beile. ("Religion is a matter between every man and God.") "*La religion est le résultat des besoins de l'âme et des effects de l'intelligence.*" — B. Constant. ("Religion is the result of the needs of the soul and the effects of the reason.") "*Religion is a certain method by which man realizes his relation to the superhuman and mysterious powers from whom he regards himself dependent.*" — Goblet d'Alviella. "*Religion is the definition of man's life by the connection of the human with that mysterious spirit, the power of which over the universe and himself he recognizes and with which he feels himself united.*" — A. Reville.

So that the essence of religion was always and is still understood by men who are not bereft of the highest

human capacity, as the establishment by man of his relation to the Infinite Being or Beings whose power he feels over himself. And however different this relation has been for different peoples at different times, it has always determined for man his destination in the world, from which naturally followed the guidance of his actions also. A Jew understood his relation to the Infinite as that of a member of a people chosen by God in preference to all other peoples, and who must therefore keep the Covenant concluded between God and this people. A Greek understood his relation as that of a being dependent upon the representatives of infinity, the gods, and who must therefore do what was pleasing to the gods. A Brahman understood his relation to the Infinite Brahma by considering himself a manifestation of this Brahma, and that it was his duty to strive to unite with this highest being, by the renunciation of life. A Buddhist understood and understands his relation to the Infinite as that of one who, passing from one form of life into another, inevitably suffers, and that as these sufferings proceed from passions and desires, therefore one should strive to destroy all passions and desires and so pass into Nirvana.

Every religion is an establishment by man of his relation to the Infinite Existence of which he feels himself a part, and from which relation he obtains the guidance for his conduct. And therefore any religion which does not establish the relation of man to the Infinite, as, for instance, Idolatry, or Magic, is not a religion, but only a corruption. And if a religion, although establishing a relation of man to God yet establishes it by assertions which disagree with reason and the modern knowledge of man so that man cannot believe such assertions, then this also is not religion, but an imitation. If a religion does not connect the life of man with the Infinite Existence, this also is not religion; and demands of faith in propositions from which no definite direction of man's actions follows, are also not religion.

True religion is the establishment by man of such a relation to the Infinite Life around him, as, while connect-

ing his life with this Infinitude and directing his conduct, is also in agreement with his reason and with human knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

The modern scientists, notwithstanding that never and at no time have people lived, nor do they now live, without religion, say, like Molière's involuntary doctor who asserted that the liver is on the left side: "'We have changed all that,' and one can and should live without religion." But religion remains as it always was, the chief motive power, the heart of the life of human societies, and without it, as without the heart, there can be no rational life. There have been, and there are, many different religions, because the expression of the relation of man to the Infinite, to God, or the gods, is different at different times, according to the different degrees of development of different nations; but no society of men since men have become rational beings could ever live and therefore never did live and cannot live without religion.

It is true that there have been (and still occur) periods in the life of nations when the existing religion was so distorted and so far behind life that it no longer guided man. But this cessation of the influence of religion, which has occurred at certain moments with every religion, has been only temporary. Religion, like everything vital, has the capacity of being born, developing, growing old, and dying, of reviving again, and reviving always in a more perfect form than before. After the period of the highest development of religion there always follows a period of weakness and lifelessness, after which again there generally follows a period of regeneration and of the establishment of a religious teaching more clear and rational than before. Such periods of development, decline, and regeneration have occurred in all religions: in the profound Brahman religion, in which the moment it began to grow old and to crystallize in coarse, permanently established forms de-

viated from its fundamental conception, there appeared on the one hand the revival of Brahmanism itself, and on the other the lofty teaching of Buddhism, which advanced mankind's understanding of its relation to the Infinite. A similar decline occurred in the Greek and Roman religion, and here also, after the decline had reached its lowest point, Christianity appeared. The same occurred with Church Christianity, which degenerated in Byzantium into idolatry and polytheism, at which time, as a counterbalance to this perverted Christianity, there appeared on the one side Paulicianism, and on the other, in opposition to the teaching of Trinity and Maryolatry, the severe Mohammedanism, with its fundamental dogma of One God. The same thing happened also with the Papal Medieval Christianity, which called forth the Reformation. So that periods of the decline of religious influence upon the majority of men present a necessary condition of the life and development of all religious teachings. This proceeds from the fact that every religious teaching in its true meaning, however crude it may be, always establishes the relation of man to the Infinite, identical for all men. Every religion recognizes man as equally insignificant in relation to Infinity; — and therefore every religion always contains the idea of the equality of all men before that which it regards as God, whether that be lightning, the wind, a tree, an animal, a hero, a deceased or even a live king, as it was in Rome. So that the recognition of the equality of men is necessarily an essential feature of every religion. But since in reality never and nowhere has there existed, nor now exists, an equality between men, therefore the moment a new religion appeared, which always included the recognition of the equality of men, then immediately those to whom inequality was advantageous endeavored to conceal this essential feature, and distorted the teaching itself. And this was what occurred always and everywhere, when a new religion appeared.

And this occurred, in the majority of cases, not consciously, but merely because men to whom inequality

was advantageous (those in power, and the wealthy), in order to feel themselves in the right in the face of the accepted teaching without altering their position, tried by every means to attribute to the new religious teaching a meaning which would allow inequality to be possible. And this distortion of the teaching, which allowed those in power over others to consider themselves in the right, being naturally transmitted to the masses, convinced them also that their submission to those in power was a demand of the religion they professed.

CHAPTER V

Every human activity is called forth by three influences: Feeling, Reason, and Suggestion (the suggestion which medical men call Hypnotism). Sometimes man acts only under the influence of feeling, and strives to attain his desires. Sometimes he acts under the influence of reason alone, which indicates to him his duties. Sometimes, and most often, man acts because he himself or other men have suggested to him a certain activity and he unconsciously submits to the suggestion. In normal conditions of life all three influences participate in man's activity. Feeling draws man toward a certain activity; reason verifies the agreement of this activity with the surrounding conditions, with the past, and with the anticipated future; and suggestion compels man to fulfil, without feeling, or thinking, the act elicited by feeling and approved by reason. If there were no feeling, man would undertake nothing; if there were no reason, man would simultaneously yield himself to many contradictory feelings, harmful to himself and others; if there were no capacity of submitting to one's own or other people's suggestion, man would have to experience that feeling which prompted him to a certain action, unceasingly, and continually to exert his reason in testing the expediency of his reason. And therefore all these three influences are indispensable to every human activity, however simple. If a man is moving

in a certain direction it is because his feeling has prompted him to move from one place to another, his reason has approved of this intention, has indicated the means to realize it (in the given case, walking along a certain road), and the muscles of his body obey. And the man advances in the desired direction. While he is advancing, his feeling and reason become free for another activity, which could not occur if the capacity of submitting to suggestion did not exist. So it is with all human activities, and so also with the most important of all — the religious activity. Feeling calls forth the necessity of establishing the relation of man to God; reason defines this relation; and suggestion prompts man to the activity which follows from this relation. But it takes place thus only while religion has not yet suffered distortion. As soon, however, as this distortion commences, suggestion becomes stronger and stronger, and the activities of feeling and reason weaker and weaker. As to the methods of suggestion, they are everywhere and always the same. They consist in profiting by those conditions of man when he is most susceptible to suggestion (childhood, and during important events in life — deaths, births, marriages), to influence him by works of art: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dramatic performances, — and in this state of susceptibility, similar to that attained over separate individuals by hypnotic sleep, to incite him to that which is desired by the inciters.

This phenomenon is observable in all the old religious teachings: in the lofty teaching of Brahmanism, degenerated into a gross worship of innumerable images in various temples with singing and incense burning; and in the ancient Hebrew religion as preached by the prophets, transformed into the worship of Jehovah in an imposing temple with solemn hymns and processions; in transcendental Buddhism, degenerated, with its monasteries and images of Buddha, with its innumerable stately rites, into Occult Lamaism; and in Taoism, with its magic and exorcism.

Always, and in all religious teachings, when they begin

to be distorted, their guardians, having brought men into a state of weakened mental activity, use all their efforts to instil into them what they think necessary. And in all religions it was necessary to instil the same three doctrines which serve as the foundation for all the distortions to which all degenerating religions are submitted. Firstly, that a certain class of men exist who alone can be the mediators between men and God or gods; secondly, that miracles have occurred or are occurring which prove and corroborate the truth of that which is asserted by the mediators between men and God; and thirdly, that there are certain words, repeated verbally or written in books, which express the unchangeable will of God or gods, and therefore are sacred and infallible. And as soon as these doctrines are accepted under hypnotic influence, then all which is asserted by the mediators between God and men is accepted as sacred truth, and the chief aim of the distortion of religion is attained; — not only the concealment of the law of human equality, but also the establishment and confirmation of the greatest inequality, the division of men into castes, into men and Yogi, into Orthodox and heretics, saints and sinners. This has taken place and is taking place with Christianity: complete inequality has been recognized, and men are divided not only in the understanding of the teaching, into clergy and laity, but also in relation to social position, into those who have power and those who must submit to power; and this is recognized as established by God Himself according to the teaching of Paul.

CHAPTER VI

The inequality of men, not only as clergy and laity, but also as rich and poor, master and slaves, has been established by the Christian Church-Religion in as definite and rigid a form as in other religions. And yet to judge by the data we have concerning the primitive condition of Christianity, and by the teaching expressed

in the Gospels, it would seem that the chief methods of distortion used in other religions had been foreseen, and a distinct warning against them uttered. Against a caste of priests it was distinctly said that no one can be another's teacher ("Be not ye called Rabbi. . . . And call no man your father. . . . Neither be ye called masters"); against attributing a sacred meaning to books it was said that it is the spirit which is important and not the letter, and that men should not believe human traditions, and that all the law and the prophets, that is, all the books regarded as Holy Writ, are summed up in this saying, that one should act toward one's neighbors as one would wish them to act toward oneself. If nothing is said against the miracles, and if in the Gospel itself miracles are described as if performed by Jesus, nevertheless from the whole spirit of the teaching it is evident that Jesus bases the truth of his teaching not on miracles but on its own merits.

("If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.") But above all, the equality of men has been proclaimed by Christianity no longer as a deduction from man's relation to the Infinite, but as the fundamental teaching of the brotherhood of men, all men having been recognized as sons of God.

It would seem, therefore, to have been impossible to so distort Christianity as to destroy the consciousness of the equality of all men. But the human mind is ingenious, and it invented, perhaps unconsciously, or half consciously, a new method or *truc*,[1] as the French say, to render the Gospel warnings and the clear declaration of the equality of men ineffectual. This "dodge" consisted in attributing infallibility not only to certain words but also to a certain body of men called The Church, which has the right to transmit this infallibility to other men elected by it. A little addition to the Gospel was also invented, — that Christ when leaving for heaven transmitted to certain men the exclusive right not only of teaching others the divine truth (according to the

[1] Trick, cunning, dodge. — Tr.

letter of the Gospel, he transmitted also at the same time the power, not generally used, of being invulnerable to serpents, poisons, and fire), but also of making men saved or unsaved, and, above all, of transmitting this right to other men. And as soon as the idea of the Church was firmly established, then all the Gospel warnings for preventing the distortion of the religion became ineffectual. Reason was termed the source of error, and the Gospel was interpreted not as common sense demands, but as those who composed the Church desired.

And therefore all the three previous methods of distorting religions — Priesthood, Miracles, and the Infallibility of Writings — were also admitted into Christianity in their fullest power. The lawfulness of the existence of mediators between God and men was recognized, because the necessity and lawfulness of mediators was recognized by the Church; the reality of miracles was recognized because the Infallible Church witnessed to them; the Bible was recognized as sacred because the Church so recognized it.

And Christianity was distorted just as all the other religions were, but with this difference: that precisely because Christianity proclaimed with especial clearness its fundamental doctrine of the equality of men as the sons of God, it was necessary to distort the whole teaching with especial force in order to conceal this fundamental doctrine. And by the help of the idea of the Church, this was accomplished to an extent greater than in any other religion.

And as a result no religion ever proclaimed statements so obviously out of agreement with reason and contemporary human knowledge. Not to mention the absurdities of the Old Testament, such as the creation of light before the sun, the creation of the world six thousand years ago, the housing of all the species of animals in the ark, and various immoral abominations such as the direction to murder children and whole populations at the command of God; not to mention also that absurd sacrament, about which Vol-

taire even used to say that though many different religions had existed and still existed, never before had there been one the principal religious act of which consisted of eating one's God — to pass these things by, what can be more senseless than the assertions that the mother of God was both a mother and a virgin — that the sky opened and a voice was heard issuing from it — that Jesus flew away into the skies and is now sitting somewhere there on the right hand of the Father — or that God is One and Three, and not three Gods like Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, but One, and at the same time Three? And what can be more immoral than that awful theology according to which God is cruel and revengeful, punishes all men for the sin of Adam, and to save them sends His Son to the earth knowing beforehand that men will kill him and will be cursed for doing so; and that the salvation of men from sin consists in being christened, or in believing that all this is actually true, that the Son of God was killed by men for the salvation of men, and that those who do not believe this will be punished by God with eternal torments? So that leaving aside the additions, as some regard them, to the chief dogmas of this religion, such as the beliefs in the various relics and *ikons*, of the Virgin Mary, of petitionary prayers directed to various saints according to their specialities, — leaving aside also the Protestant doctrine of predestination, — the foundations of this religion, established by the Nicene Creed, and recognized by every one, are so absurd and immoral, and are developed to such a degree of contradiction to normal human feeling and reason, that men cannot believe them. Men may with their lips repeat certain words, but they cannot believe that which has no sense. One may say with one's lips: "I believe that the world was created six thousand years ago;" or, "I believe that Jesus flew away into the skies and is sitting on the right hand of the Father;" or, "God is One, and also Three;" — but no one can believe it, because the words have no sense. And therefore the men of our modern world who profess distorted Christianity, in reality believe in nothing.

And it is in this that the peculiarity of our time consists.

CHAPTER VII

In our time men believe in nothing, and yet, owing to the false definition of faith which they have drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, incorrectly attributed to Paul, they imagine that they have a faith. Faith, according to this definition, is ὑπόστασις (the realization) of things hoped for, and ἔλενχος (the certainty) of things not seen. But besides the impossibility of faith being the realization of things hoped for, faith being a mental state, and the realization of things hoped for an external event, — faith also is not the certainty of things unseen, for this certainty, as stated in the comment farther on, is founded on confidence in the witness of the truth, and confidence and faith are two different conceptions.

Faith is not hope, and not confidence, but a separate mental state. Faith is man's consciousness of a certain position in the world which imposes on him the obligation to fulfil certain actions. A man acts according to his faith, not, as it is said in the Catechism, because he believes in the Unseen as much as in the seen; and not because he hopes to receive his expectation; but only because having defined his position in the Universe he naturally acts in conformity with this position. So that an agriculturist cultivates the land, and a sailor undertakes a voyage, not because, as it is stated in the Catechism, they both believe in the Unseen, or hope to receive a reward for their action (this hope does exist, but it is not by it that they are directed), but because they regard this activity as their calling. So also the religious believer acts in a certain way, not because he believes in the Unseen, or expects a reward for his activity, but because, having understood his position in the Universe, he naturally acts in accordance with this position. If a man has defined his position in society as that of an unskilled or skilled laborer, or a government official, or a merchant, he regards it as necessary to

work, and as an unskilled or skilled laborer, an official, or a merchant, he does his work. So also in general a man who defines his position in the Universe in one way or another, inevitably and naturally acts in accordance with this definition (sometimes even not a definition but only a vague consciousness). Thus, for example, a man who has defined his position as that of a member of a people chosen by God, who, in order to profit by God's protection, must obey the commands of this God, will so live as to obey these commands; and a second man who has defined his position as that of one who has passed and is passing through various forms of existence and from whose actions depend whether his future will be better or worse, will also be guided in life by this definition of his; and the conduct of a third man, who has defined his position as that of an accidental combination of atoms in which consciousness has become kindled for a time, but which will eventually perish forever, — will differ from the two former men.

The conduct of these men will be quite different because they have defined their position differently; that is, they have a different faith. Faith is the same as religion, only with this difference, that by the word *religion* we imply a certain phenomenon externally observed, whereas by *faith* we mean the same thing experienced by man within himself. Faith is man's conception of his relation to the Infinite Universe,[1] and the direction of his activity resulting from that conception. And therefore true faith is never irrational, or in disagreement with existing knowledge, and its feature cannot be supernaturalism and senselessness, as is supposed and has been expressed by a Father of the Church, who said, "*Credo quia absurdum.*" On the contrary, the assertions of true faith, although they cannot be proved, not only never contain anything contrary to the reason and the knowledge of man, but always explain that which in life without these conceptions of true faith appears irrational and contradictory.

[1] The Russian word, translated here as "Infinite Universe," embraces the whole spiritual and material existence. — *Trans.*

Thus, for instance, the ancient Hebrew who believed in the existence of a Supreme, Eternal, Almighty Being, who created the Universe, the Earth, the Animals, Man, and so forth, and promised protection to His people if this people obeyed His law, — this man believed in nothing irrational or opposed to his knowledge, but on the contrary his faith explained to him many things in life which otherwise were inexplicable.

So also the Hindoo who believes that our souls have been in animals and that according to our good or bad life they will pass into higher or lower animals, explains to himself by this belief much which without it is incomprehensible.

So too with a man who regards life as an evil and the object of life as the attainment of peace by the annihilation of desires. He believes not in something irrational, but on the contrary in that which renders his life-conception more rational than it was without this belief.

So too with a true Christian, who believes that God is the spiritual father of all men and that man's highest welfare is attained when he recognizes his sonship to God and the brotherhood of all men.

All these beliefs, even though they may not be provable, are not irrational in themselves, but on the contrary supply a more rational meaning to the phenomena of life, which appear irrational and contradictory without them. And besides this all these beliefs defining the position of man in the universe necessarily demand certain actions corresponding to this position. And therefore if a religious teaching establishes senseless ideas which explain nothing, but only still more confuse the understanding of life, then this is not faith but a distortion of faith, which has already lost the features of true faith and which lays no obligations on men but rather becomes their tool.

One of the chief distinctions between true faith and its corruption, is that when it is corrupted man demands of God that in return for his sacrifices and prayers God should fulfil his desires, should be the servant of man. Whereas according to true faith man feels that God

demands of him, a man, the fulfilment of *His* will, demands that man should serve Him.

And it is just this faith which is not only lacking in the men of our times, — they even do not know what it is, and imply by faith either the repetition with the lips of whatever is taught them as the essence of faith, or else the fulfilment of rites which according to the teaching of Church-Christianity contribute to their obtaining what they desire.

CHAPTER VIII

Men to-day are without faith. One set, the educated well-to-do minority, have freed themselves from the influence of the Church and believe in nothing, regarding all faiths either as absurdities or as useful tools for keeping the masses under their power. Whereas the great destitute uneducated majority who with some few exceptions do indeed believe, being under hypnotic influence, imagine that what is suggested to them as faith is faith, but in reality it is not faith, as it not only fails to explain to man his position in the Universe but still more confuses him.

From this situation and from the mutual relation between the unbelieving and simulating minority and the hypnotized majority, is composed the life of our so-called Christian world.

And this life, both of the minority which holds in its hands the means of hypnotism, as well as of the majority which is hypnotized, is terrible, both because of the cruelty and immorality of the rulers and of the crushed and stupefied state of the great working masses. Never at any period of religious decline did the indifference to and forgetfulness of the principal feature of all religions, and especially of the Christian one, — the equality of man, — attain the degree it has reached in our day.

Besides the complete absence of religion, the main reason of the awful modern cruelty of man to man is also due to that refined complexity of life which con-

ceals from men the effects of their actions. However cruel Attilas and Khenghiz Khans and their men may have been when they themselves killed face to face with their victims, the process of killing must have been much more unpleasant to them, and still more so the consequences of the killing, the cries of the relatives, the sight of the corpses; so that the consequences of their cruelty moderated it. But in our time we kill men through the medium of so complicated a transferring apparatus, and the consequences of our cruelty are so carefully removed and concealed from us, that there are no influences to moderate the cruelty, and the cruelty of one group of men toward others keeps increasing and increasing, and has at the present time attained limits which it never before reached.

If in our day any man — I do not say a Nero, a recognized villain, but any ordinary man — should wish to construct a pond of human blood for the purpose of enabling sick wealthy people under the advice of scientific medical men to bathe in, I think he would be able to arrange it without hindrance so long as he did so in the ordinary respectable way; that is, did not by force compel people to shed their blood, but placed them in a position where they could not live without shedding it; and, besides, if he invited the clergy, who would consecrate the new pond, just as they consecrate cannons, rifles, prisons, gallows, and men of science, who would invent the proofs of the necessity and lawfulness of such an institution, just as they have discovered the proofs of the necessity of wars and houses of ill-fame.

The essential principle of all religions, the equality of man, has been forgotten to such an extent, abandoned, and obstructed by various absurd dogmas, in the religion professed; whilst in science inequality in the form of the struggle of existence and the survival of the fittest has also been so completely recognized as the necessary phenomenon of life — that the destruction of millions of human lives for the convenience of those in power is regarded as a most ordinary and necessary phenomenon of life, and is continually being produced.

Men of our day cannot sufficiently plume themselves on those brilliant, unprecedented, colossal successes which have been won in the technical sphere during the nineteenth century.

There is no doubt that there has never been in history so great a material success — so great a control over the forces of nature — as that which has been attained in the nineteenth century. But there is also no doubt that never in history has there been such an example of immoral life, free from any forces that control the animal propensities of man, — as that lived by our Christian humanity, which is becoming more and more bestial.

The material success attained by the men of the nineteenth century is indeed great, but this success has been and is bought by an indifference to the most elementary demands of morality to which humanity has never before attained, even in the times of Khenghiz Khan, Attila, or Nero.

There is no dispute that ironclads, railways, book-printing, tunnels, photographs, Röntgen rays, and so forth, are all very fine. They are all very fine, but human lives are also fine, incomparably fine, as Ruskin used to say, those human lives which are pitilessly ruined by the million to purchase ironclads, railroads, tunnels, which not only do not adorn but disfigure life. To this it is generally replied that appliances are already being invented, and in the future will be invented still more, by means of which human lives will not be ruined as they are now; — but this is not true. If men do not regard themselves as all brothers, and human life is not considered the most sacred object, which not only cannot be violated, but the maintenance of which should be regarded as man's first and most urgent duty, — that is, if men do not regard each other religiously, they will always for their own personal advantages ruin each other's lives. Not even a fool will consent to spend thousands when he can attain the same end by spending a hundred, with the addition of a few human lives which are in his power. In

Chicago approximately the same number of men are killed by the railways every year. And the owners of the railways quite naturally do not adopt those appliances which would reduce the number, calculating that the annual payment to the injured or their families is less than the interest on the cost of the appliances.

It may well be that those who ruin human lives for their own advantages will be shamed by public opinion and compelled to adopt the necessary appliances; but if men are not religious and do their deeds to please men and not to please God, then, having adopted appliances to save human lives in one place, they will profit in some other way by human lives, as the most advantageous material for increasing their wealth.

It is easy to conquer nature, to construct railways, steamboats, museums, and so forth, if one is not sparing of human lives. The Egyptian kings were proud of their pyramids, and we admire them enthusiastically, forgetting those millions of lives of slaves which were destroyed during their construction. And so we admire also palaces, as we see them in exhibitions, our ironclads, our transoceanic cables, — forgetting what we pay for all this. We might be proud of these things if it were all done voluntarily by free men, and not by slaves.

The Christian nations have conquered and subdued the American Indians, Hindoos, Africans, are now conquering and subduing the Chinese, and they are proud of this. But these conquests and subjugations occur not because Christian nations are spiritually superior to those conquered, but on the contrary because spiritually they are incomparably inferior. Leaving Hindoos and Chinese aside, even the Zulus had and have obligatory religious rules of some kind which imposed certain actions and forbade others; whereas our Christian nations have none. Rome conquered the whole world just when it had become free from every religion. This, only in a still stronger degree, is now also taking place with the Christian nations. They are all in the same condition of the absence of

religion, and therefore, notwithstanding their inner dissensions, they are all united as one federated band of robbers in which theft, loot, depravity, murder of individuals and masses are accomplished not only without the least tremor of conscience but with the greatest self-satisfaction, as in China the other day. Some believe in nothing, and are proud of it; others simulate belief in that which for their own advantage they instil into the people under the pretense of faith; others again — the great majority, the whole of the people — accept as faith that hypnotic suggestion to which they are subjected, and servilely submit to everything demanded of them by the ruling suggestors who themselves believe in nothing.

And these suggestors demand what was demanded by all the Neros who tried to fill up in some way their empty lives — the satisfaction of their insane luxury spreading out in all directions. And luxury is attained by naught else than the enslavery of man; the moment there is slavery luxury augments; the increase of luxury inevitably drags with it the increase of slavery, because only hungry, cold, want-driven people will all their lives do what is unnecessary for themselves but necessary for the amusement of their rulers.

CHAPTER IX

In the sixth chapter of the Book of Genesis there is a passage of deep meaning, in which the author says that God, before the Flood, having seen that that Spirit of His which He gave to men for His service was only used by them for the service of their flesh, — was so angry with them that He regretted their creation, and before their entire destruction decided to shorten the life of men to a hundred and twenty years. It is just this which according to the Biblical narrative angered God and caused Him to shorten the life of man, which has now occurred with the men of our Christian world.

Reason is that power in men which defines their relation to the Universe; and as the relation of all men to the Universe is the same, the establishment of this relation, that is, religion, unites men. And the unity of men affords them the highest physical and spiritual welfare accessible to them.

Complete unity in the most perfect, lofty reason, and therefore complete welfare, is the ideal toward which humanity is striving; and every religion which answers the questions of the men of a given society both as to what is the Universe, and what they are in this Universe, unites men, and therefore brings them nearer to the realization of complete welfare. But when reason, abandoning its proper function of defining man's relation to God and his corresponding activities, is directed not only to the service of man's flesh, and not only to cruel strife with men and other beings, but also to the justification of their life, which is contrary both to the nature and the destiny of man, then occur those terrible calamities from which the majority of men are now suffering and those conditions which appear to preclude all possibility of a return to a rational and righteous life.

Heathens mutually united by the crudest religious teaching are much nearer the conception of the truth than the pseudo-Christian nations of our time, who live without religion, and amongst whom the foremost men are persuaded and teach to others that religion is not necessary, and that it is much better to live without any religion.

Amongst heathens there may be found men who, having become conscious of the contradictions between their faith and their increasing knowledge and the demands of their reason, will work out or assimilate a new religious teaching more in harmony with the new mental state of their nation, — a religion which will be accepted by their countrymen and fellow-believers. But the men of our world, some of whom regard religion as an instrument for subjugation, others as nonsense, and others again, — the great majority of the people, under the in-

fluence of a gross deceit, — believe they possess true religion, the men of our Christian world have become impenetrable to the influence of any progressive movement toward truth.

Proud of their improvements for the life of the body, and of their refined idle theories which not only justify their life, but also demonstrate their superiority to all nations of all past epochs, — they stagnate in their ignorance and immorality, in the full assurance that they stand on a height to which humanity had never before attained, and that each step on the road of ignorance and immorality lifts them up to a yet higher plane of enlightenment and progress.

CHAPTER X

It is natural to a man to establish conformity between his physical and his rational activities. A man can have no peace until he has established this conformity one way or another. But it can be established in two ways. One way is when a man is persuaded by his reason of the necessity or desirability of a certain action or actions, and then acts according to this decision. The other way is when a man acts under the influence of his feelings, and then invents a mental explanation or justification for his act.

The first method of conforming one's action with one's reason is natural to those who profess some kind of religion, and who know by its precepts what they should and what they should not do. The second method is natural chiefly to irreligious people, who do not possess any general principal for deciding the qualities of their actions, and who therefore always establish the harmony between reason and conduct, not by subordinating conduct to reason, but, after having acted under the influence of feeling, by using their reason to justify their action.

A religious man, knowing what is good or bad in his conduct, and that of other men, and why one thing is good and another bad, will, if he sees a contradiction

between the demand of his reason and his actions, or those of other men, use all the efforts of his reason to discover a way to destroy these contradictions; that is, to learn to harmonize his actions with the demands of his reason in the best way. Whereas an irreligious man, having no guide to decide the merits of his actions other than the pleasure they afford him, surrendering to the impulse of his numerous and often antagonistic feelings, involuntarily falls into contradiction; and having so fallen endeavors to solve or conceal it by arguments more or less complicated and ingenious, but always untruthful. And therefore, while the reasoning of religious people is always simple, uncomplicated, and truthful, the mental activity of irreligious people becomes especially subtle, complicated, and untruthful.

I will take the commonest example. A man is addicted to depravity; that is, is unchaste, unfaithful to his wife, or else lives immorally being unmarried. If he is a religious man he knows this is wrong, and the whole force of his reason is directed toward finding a way to free himself from his vice: avoiding association with adulterers, increasing his labors, arranging a rigorous life, not allowing himself to look on women as objects of lust, and so forth. And this is all very simple and can be understood by every one. But if the depraved man is irreligious, he immediately invents all sorts of reasons why it is very good to love women. And here begin all kinds of most intricate, cunning, and refined considerations, about the affinity of souls, about beauty, about free love, etc., — which the more they are developed the more they obscure the question and conceal what is essential.

The same thing occurs with irreligious people in all spheres of action and thought. With the object of concealing their inherent contradictions, they accumulate all sorts of elaborate and specious arguments, which by filling their minds with unnecessary frivolities divert their attention from the important and essential, and give them the possibility of becoming hardened in that deceit in which the men of our world live without noticing it.

"Men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil," it is said in the Gospels. "For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reproved."

And therefore the men of our civilized world, having organized the most cruel, animal, immoral life, owing to the absence of religion, have also brought their involved, elaborate, useless mental activities, concealing the evil of this life, to that degree of unnecessary complication and intricacy that the majority have entirely lost all capacity of recognizing the distinction between good and evil, falsehood and truth.

To the men of our civilized world not one question exists which they can approach directly and simply: every question, economical, civic, political, diplomatic, scientific, to say nothing of philosophic and religious questions, are presented so falsely and artificially, and are therefore enveloped in so dense a shroud of intricate, unnecessary arguments, of elaborate distortions of ideas and words, of sophisms and disputations, that all discussions of such questions move in circles, and, like wheels without a connecting strap, which propel nothing, lead to no results, except the one object for which they were produced: the concealment from oneself and others of the evil in which men live and which they commit.

CHAPTER XI

In all the spheres of the so-called science of to-day there is one feature which renders ineffective all the efforts directed to the investigation of the various departments of knowledge. This feature is that all the investigations of contemporary science avoid the essential problem to which an answer is required, and study secondary matters, the investigation of which leads to nothing and becomes the more confused the longer it is continued.

And indeed this cannot be otherwise with a science

which selects the objects of its investigations accidentally and not according to the demands of a religious conception of life, which would define what should be studied and why, what first and what after. Thus, for instance, in the at present fashionable sciences of sociology or political economy, one would think there could be but one question: What is the cause and purpose of some people doing nothing and others working for them? (If there is another question: Why people work separately, hindering each other, and not together, in common, which would be more advantageous?—this question is included in the other. If there were no inequality there would be no struggle.) One would imagine there was only this one question, but science does not even think of putting it and answering it, but instead it raises its own distant discussions and then leads them so that in no way can their deductions either solve or contribute to the solution of the fundamental question. Arguments are started about what was and is, and this past and present is considered as something as unalterable as the movements of the stars. Abstract theories are invented about values, capital, profit, interest,—and a complex mental play, a hundred years old, ensues between disputing men. Whereas in reality the question is solved very simple and easily.

The solution is in this: As all men are brothers and equal, each should act with others as he desires that others should act with him; and therefore the whole kernel of the matter lies in the destruction of the false religious law and the reëstablishment of the true law. But the leaders of our Christian world not only decline to accept this solution,—on the contrary they endeavor to conceal the possibility of such a solution, and for this purpose lend themselves to those idle theorizings which they call science.

The same thing occurs in the sphere of jurisprudence. One would imagine that the one essential question is, Why do people exist who allow themselves to exercise violence toward other men, to rob, imprison, execute them, send them to wars, and much else? The solution

is very simple if the question is considered from the only standpoint which is adequate — the religious standpoint. From the religious point of view man cannot and should not exercise violence toward his neighbor; and therefore to solve the question one thing is necessary: to destroy all the superstitions and sophisms which admit violence, and to instil into men the religious principles which clearly exclude the possibility of violence.

But the leaders not only refrain from this, but use all their mental subtlety to hide from men the possibility and necessity of this solution. They write a mountain of books about various rights — civil, criminal, police, ecclesiastical, financial, and so forth, and dilate and dispute on these themes, quite persuaded that they are doing not only a useful but a very important work. As to the question why amongst men who are in essence equal, some judge, coerce, plunder, and execute others, — to this they not only give no answer, they do not even recognize its existence. According to their doctrine it appears that these acts of violence are accomplished, not by men, but by some sort of abstraction called The State.

In the same way the scientists of our day avoid and pass by in silence all the essential questions and hide the inner contradictions in all spheres of knowledge.

In the sphere of historical knowledge there is only one question — How the workers, that is, 999 thousandths of all mankind, lived? To this question there is not even the semblance of an answer. The question does not even exist, but mountains of books are written by historians of one class about the stomach-aches of Louis XI., about the villainies of Elizabeth of England and Ivan the Terrible, and who were their ministers, and what verses and comedies were composed by the *litterateurs* for the amusement of these kings and their mistresses and ministers; while the historians of another class write about the importance of the land in which the peoples lived, what they ate, what they traded in, and what clothes they wore, — in general about everything which had no influence on the life of the people but was the result of their religion, which is regarded by

the historians of this category as itself the result of the food and clothing used by the people.

And yet the answer to the question, how the workers formerly lived, can be given only by recognizing religion as the necessary condition of the life of the people. And therefore the answer is to be found in the study of the religions professed by the nations, which placed them in their several positions.

In the sphere of natural sciences one would think there was no particular necessity for obscuring the common sense of people, but here also, owing to the trend of thought which the science of our day has taken, instead of the most natural answers to the question, What is the description of this world of human beings, plants, and animals, and how is it subdivided? — only idle, obscure, and utterly useless chatter is circulated, chiefly directed against the Biblical story of the creation of the world, and about how organisms originated, which is really of no use to any one, and besides cannot be ascertained, as this origin, however we explain it, will always be concealed from us in the infinitude of time and space. And on these themes theories, refutations, and supplementary theories have been invented which form the subject of millions of books, and the unexpected deduction from which is only one: That the law of life to which man must submit is the struggle for existence. More than this, practical sciences like technology and medicine, in consequence of the absence of a leading religious principle, involuntarily diverge from a rational end and take a false direction. Thus all technology is directed, not to the end of alleviating the labor of the people, but to improvements necessary only for the wealthy classes, and which tend to separate still further the rich from the poor, the masters from the slaves. And if certain advantages from these inventions and improvements, some crumbs, fall to the lot of the masses, this is not at all because they have been apportioned, but only because they are of such a character that they cannot be kept back.

And so with medical science, which has in its false

direction reached that stage where it is accessible only to the wealthy classes, whereas the masses, owing to their mode of life and their poverty, and to the neglect of the chief problems of the amelioration of the life of the poor, can only profit by it in such proportions and under such conditions that its help only demonstrates more clearly the deviation of medical science from its proper end.

But these deviations from, and the distortion of, the essential problems is most astounding in what is called Philosophy. One would think there is one problem which philosophy ought to solve: What am I to do? And if in the philosophies of Christian nations the answers to this question have been unnecessarily associated with the greatest confusion, yet there were answers, in the teaching of Spinoza, of Kant in his "Kritik of Practical Reason," of Schopenhauer, and especially of Rousseau. But in later days, since the time of Hegel, who recognized everything that is as rational, the question "What am I to do?" recedes into the background, and philosophy directs the whole of its attention to the investigation of that which is, and to conforming it to a previously prepared theory. This is the first step in the descent. The next step, which reduces human thought yet lower, is the recognition of "struggle for existence" as the fundamental law, merely because this struggle is observable in animals and plants. According to this theory it is claimed that the destruction of the weaker is a law which should not be opposed. Finally comes the third step, the mischievous attempts at originality of a half-mad Nietzsche, which do not even represent anything whole and connected, — the random jottings of immoral thoughts founded on nothing, — but which are recognized by advanced people as the last word of philosophical science; and in answer to the question "What am I to do?" one is told directly, "Live for your own pleasure without attending to the life of others."

If any one were to doubt that terrible stupefaction and bestiality which has been attained by modern Chris-

tian humanity, then, leaving out of account the latest crimes, the Boer and Chinese wars, which are defended by the clergy and recognized as heroic feats by all in power, — this one extraordinary success of Nietzsche's writings may serve as an irrefutable proof. The disconnected writings of an agile but unintelligent and abnormal German, possessed of the mania of grandeur, appear, aiming at effect in the most trivial way. Neither in their ability nor their truth have these writings any real claim to the attention of the public. Such writings, not only in the time of Kant, Leibnitz, Hume, but even fifty years ago, would not only have failed to attract attention but could not even have appeared; whilst in our time, all so-called educated humanity is enchanted with the ravings of Mons. Nietzsche, refutes and interprets him, and his works are published in every language in innumerable copies.

Turgenieff has humorously said that reversed platitudes are often employed by incapable men to draw attention to themselves. For instance, every one knows that water is wet, but suddenly a man with a serious mien says that water is dry, alluding to ice, and such a statement, expressed with assurance, attracts attention.

Thus, also, the whole world knows that virtue consists in the subjugation of one's passions — in self-sacrifice. This is recognized not by Christianity alone, with which Nietzsche imagines he is fighting, — it is the eternal higher law which humanity has reached in Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, in the ancient Persian religion. And suddenly a man appears who declares that he has become persuaded that self-sacrifice, meekness, humility, love, are all vices which ruin mankind (he has in view Christianity, forgetting all other religions). One can understand that such an assertion staggers people at first. But having reflected a little and failed to find in the work any proof of this strange assertion, every rational man must thrust aside such a book, and only feel astonishment that in our time there is no absurdity too great to find a publisher. But with Nietzsche's books this is not the case. The majority of men, pseudo-

enlightened, examine the theory of the "Ober-Mensche" seriously, and consider its author a great philosopher, a successor to Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant.

And all this happens for this reason, that for the majority of the pseudo-enlightened men of our day the allusion to virtue and its principal basis, self-sacrifice, love, which restrain and condemn their animal life, is abhorrent, and it is pleasant to them to meet a doctrine of cruelty asserting the justice of establishing one's own happiness and greatness on the lives of the others on whom we feed, even though expressed haphazardly, illogically, disconnectedly.

CHAPTER XII

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Scribes for having taken the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and neither entered themselves nor allowed others to enter.

This is what is now being done by the scientific Scribes of to-day: these men have taken the keys, not of the Kingdom of Heaven, but of enlightenment, and neither enter themselves nor admit others. The augurs — the Priesthood — by the means of every kind of deceit and hypnotism have persuaded men that Christianity is not a doctrine which preaches the equality of all men and so destroys the entire modern heathen organization of life, but on the contrary that it supports it, and dictates to men that they must distinguish some from others, as stars are distinguished; that they must recognize that all power is from God, and willingly submit to it; and in general persuades the oppressed that their position is from God, and that they must bear it in meekness and humility, and submit to those oppressors who not only may not be meek and humble themselves, but must, while correcting others, teach and punish, — like Emperors, Kings, Popes, Bishops, and every class of secular and spiritual rulers, — living meanwhile in a splendor and luxury which it is the duty of their inferiors to supply. It is, thanks to this false teaching,

which they support energetically, that those in power rule the people and force them to serve their idleness, luxury, and vices.

And the only men who are emancipated from the Church-hypnotism, and who alone might save the people from their oppression, and who say they do desire this, — the scientists, — instead of doing the things which might accomplish what they desire, do exactly the contrary, and imagine that they are thus serving the people.

One might think that the most superficial observation of that which above all preoccupies those who keep the people under their power would enable these men of science to understand what force moves and restrains nations in a certain position, and that they ought to direct all their attention to this force. But they not only fail to do this, — they regard it as utterly useless.

These men appear not to wish to see this, and they carefully, and often sincerely, do for the people the most varied things, but do not do that one thing which before all is necessary to the people. Their activity resembles that of a man who might endeavor to move a train by muscular efforts, — he need only mount the tender and do what he continually sees the engine driver do — turn the handle which admits the steam into the cylinder. This steam is the religious life-conception of men. And scientists need only observe with what jealousy all rulers reserve to themselves this motive force, through which they rule the nations, in order to understand to what their energies should be directed if they would liberate the people from their slavery.

What does the Turkish Sultan defend, and to what does he hold most closely? And why does the Russian Emperor, arriving at any town, go to kiss the local relics and *ikons* before he does anything else? And why, notwithstanding all the varnish of culture with which he covers himself, does the German Emperor, in all his speeches appropriately or inappropriately allude to God, to Christ, to the sanctity of religion and the oath, etc? Why, because they all know that their power is based

on the army, and the army, the possibility of the existence of the army, is based only on religion. And if the wealthy are especially pious and pretend to be believers, go to church and keep the Sabbath day, they do all this chiefly because their instinct of self-preservation tells them that their exceptionally advantageous position in society is connected with the religion they profess.

These people often do not know in what way their power is founded on the religious deceit, but through the instinct of self-preservation they know where their weak point lies, upon which their position is dependent, and they protect this point before everything else. These men will always permit, and have permitted within certain limits, socialistic and even revolutionary propaganda, but the religious foundations they will never allow to be touched.

And therefore if the leaders of to-day, the Scientists, Liberals, Socialists, Revolutionists, Anarchists, cannot understand from psychology or history what it is which moves nations, they might at least through this obvious experience become convinced that the motive power lies, not in material conditions, but only in religion.

But, strange to say, the scientists, the leaders of to-day, whilst very excellently analyzing and understanding the conditions of the life of the nations, do not see what so obviously strikes one in the face. If those who act so leave the people in religious ignorance intentionally, in order to retain their advantageous position in the minority, this is a terrible, an infamous deceit. Those who so act are those very Pharisees whom more than any one else, whom even alone amongst all men, Jesus condemned — condemned because no monsters or miscreants have introduced and are introducing so much evil into the life of mankind as they.

If, on the other hand, these men are sincere, then the only explanation of this strange blindness is that, as the masses are under the hypnotism of false religion, so also these pseudo-enlightened people of to-day are under the hypnotism of false science, which has decided that the chief nerve by which humanity has always lived

and is living, is no longer necessary, and may be replaced by something else.

CHAPTER XIII

It is in this error or deceit of the Scribes — of educated men of our world — that the especial feature of our period consists, and in this lies the cause of the calamitous state in which Christian humanity is living, and of that animalism into which it is sinking deeper and deeper.

Generally, the leading educated men of to-day assert that those false religious beliefs which are held by the masses are of no special importance, and that it is not worth while to, nor is there any need of, contesting them directly, as Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others did. Science, in their opinion, that is, that disconnected casual information which they spread amongst the people, will attain this end by itself; that is, man, having learnt how many millions of miles the earth is from the sun, and what minerals the sun and stars contain, will cease to believe in ecclesiastical doctrines.

In this sincere or insincere assertion or assumption lies a great error or else a terrible piece of guile. From earliest childhood, the age most receptive of suggestion, at the very time when the educator cannot be too careful about what he transmits, senseless and immoral dogmas of so-called Christian religion, incompatible with reason or knowledge, are instilled into the child. He is taught the dogma of the Trinity, unacceptable to common sense, the descent of one of these three gods to earth to redeem the human race, his resurrection and ascension to heaven; he is taught to expect the second advent, and punishment with eternal torments for unbelief in these dogmas; he is taught to pray about his wants, and much else. And when all these conceptions, opposed both to reason and to modern knowledge, as well as to the human conscience, are ineffaceably printed on the receptive mind

of the child, he is left alone to discriminate as he can among all those contradictions which follow from the dogmas he has accepted and assimilated as the very truth. No one tells him how he can and should reconcile these contradictions, and if theologians endeavor to reconcile them, their efforts only still further confuse the matter. And so by degrees the man becomes accustomed (and in this the theologians vigorously support him) to the idea that one cannot trust in reason and that therefore everything is possible in the world, and that in man there is nothing by the aid of which he can distinguish for himself good from evil and falsehood from truth; and that in what is most important for him — his conduct — he must be guided, not by his reason, but by what other men tell him. One can understand what a terrible distortion must be produced in the spiritual part of man by such an education, maintained in maturity by all the means of hypnotic suggestion which are continually being applied to the people by the aid of the priesthood.

And if a man of strong spirit with great difficulty and sufferings frees himself from the hypnotic influence in which he was educated in childhood and confirmed in maturity, then the distortion of his mind produced by the persuasion that he must not trust his reason, cannot pass away without leaving traces, just as in the physical world the infection of an organism with a powerful poison cannot pass without traces. Having freed himself from the hypnotism of this deceit, such a man, hating the lie from which he has just escaped, will naturally adopt that theory of the leaders in which all religion is regarded as one of the principal obstacles to the advance of humanity along the way of progress. And having adopted this view, such a man will become, like his teachers, an unprincipled man; that is, without conscience, guided in life only by his lusts, and far from condemning himself for this, will regard himself as on the highest plane of mental development accessible to humanity.

So it will be with the strong man. Whereas the

weaker ones, although they may awake to doubt, will never altogether liberate themselves from that deceit in which they were educated, and accepting and inventing various ingeniously woven cloudy theories intended to justify the senselessness of the accepted dogmas, living in a region of doubts, mists, sophisms, and self-deceit, will only contribute to the blinding of the masses and to hindering their awakening.

And the masses, possessing neither the power nor the possibility of struggling with the hypnotic influence they are subjected to, will live and die, generation after generation, as they do now, bereft of the highest human welfare, — of a true religious understanding of life, — and will always be a passive tool in the hands of the classes which rule and deceive them.

And it is this terrible deceit that the scientific leading men say is not important and is not worth while fighting! The only explanation of such an assertion, if those who make it are sincere, is, that they are themselves under the hypnotism of false science. And, if they are not sincere, is, that to attack established beliefs is disadvantageous and often dangerous. One way or the other, at all events, the assertion that the profession of a false religion is harmless or merely unimportant, and that therefore one can spread enlightenment without destroying the religious deceit, is utterly untrue.

The salvation of mankind from their calamities lies only in their emancipation from that hypnotic influence in which they are held by their priests, as well as from that into which they are led by the scientists. Before one can pour anything into a vessel one must first empty it of what it already contains. So also it is necessary to free men from the deceit in which they are held in order that they may accept true religion, that is, a true relation to the source of all, — God, — corresponding to the development of humanity, and a guide for their actions deduced from this relation.

CHAPTER XIV

"But does a true religion really exist? All religions are infinitely different, and one has no right to call any particular religion the true one merely because it corresponds most nearly to our tastes," those will say who examine religions in their externalities as some sort of disease, from which they feel themselves free, but from which others are still suffering. But this is untrue: Religions are different in their external forms, but they are all the same in their fundamental principles. And it is just these fundamental principles of all religions which represent that true religion which alone today is natural to all men, and the acceptation of which can alone save men from their calamities.

Humanity has existed for a long period, and just as it has from generation to generation elaborated its practical acquisitions, so also it could not help elaborating those spiritual principles which have formed the basis of its life, and the rules of conduct which follow from these principles. That blind men do not see them is no proof that they do not exist.

Such a modern religion, common to all men, — not some one particular religion with all its peculiarities and distortions, but a religion consisting of those principles which are the same in all the religions obtaining among men and known to us, professed by more than nine-tenths of the human race, — such a universal religion does exist, and men have not yet become finally brutalized only because the best men of all nations adhere to this religion and profess it, even though unconsciously, and it is only the inculcation of deceit which is practised on men by the aid of the priests and the scientists which hinders them from accepting it consciously.

The principles of this true religion are so natural to men that the moment they are communicated they are accepted as something long familiar and self-evident. For us this true religion is Christianity, in those of its

principles in which it coincides, not with the external forms, but with the fundamental principles of Brahmanism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Buddhism, even Mohammedanism. In the same way, for those who profess Brahmanism, Confucianism, and so on, the true religion will be the one the fundamental principles of which coincide with those of all the other great religions. And these principles are very simple, comprehensible, and not numerous.

They assert that there is a God, the source of all; that in man there is a particle of this divine element which he can either diminish or increase by his life; that to increase this element man must suppress his passions and increase love in himself; and that the practical means to attain this is to act with others as one wishes others to act toward oneself. All these principles are common to Brahmanism and Judaism and Confucianism and Taoism and Buddhism and Christianity and Mohammedanism. (If Buddhism gives no definition of God it nevertheless recognizes that with which man unites and into which he is immersed when he reaches Nirvana. So that what man is united with when immersed in Nirvana is the same essence which is recognized as God in Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism.)

"But this is not religion," the men of our times who are accustomed to accept what is supernatural, that is, senseless, as the chief feature of religion, will say; "this is anything you may like: philosophy, ethics, reason, but not religion." Religion, according to their conception, must be senseless and incomprehensible (*credo quia absurdum*). And yet it was only out of these very principles, or rather out of their being taught as religious doctrine, that by a long process of distortion all the absurdities about miracles and supernatural events which are regarded as the fundamental features of religion were elaborated. To assert that the supernatural and irrational elements represent the essential features of religion, is like a man, while looking only at rotten apples, asserting that a repulsive

flavor and a pernicious effect on the digestion are the essential qualities of the apple as a fruit.

Religion must define the relation of man to the source of all, the destiny of man which follows from this relation, and the rules of conduct from this destiny. And the universal religion, the fundamental principles of which are identical in all faiths, entirely satisfies these demands. It defines the relation of man to God as that of a part to the whole; it deduces from this relation the function of man as the increase in himself of the divine element; and from this function it deduces practical rules from the principle of acting toward others as one wishes others to act toward oneself.

People often doubt, and I have myself at one time doubted, that such an abstract rule as the one that we should act toward others as we desire others to act toward oneself could be as obligatory a rule and guide in one's conduct as the more simple rules about fasting, prayer, communion, etc. But this doubt is irrefutably answered, if by nothing else, by the spiritual condition of the Russian peasant, who will rather die than spit the sacrament into the dust, although in obedience to the commands of men he is ready to kill his brothers.

Why should not the demands deduced from the rule of acting toward others as one wishes them to act toward oneself, — not to kill one's brothers, not to abuse men, not to commit adultery, not to revenge, not to profit by the need of one's brothers to satisfy one's fancies, and so on, — why should not these demands be instilled with the same strenuousness and become as obligatory and untransgressible as faith in the sanctity of the sacrament, *ikons*, and so on, for those whose faith is founded more on confidence than on a clear inner consciousness?

CHAPTER XV

The truths of the universal religion of to-day are so simple, comprehensible, and near to the heart of every one that it would seem sufficient for all parents,

rulers, and teachers — instead of the outlived and senseless doctrines of Trinities, virgin mothers, redemptions, Indras and Trimourtis, of Buddhas flying away into the skies, of Mohammeds, in which they often do not themselves believe — to instil into children and adults those clear, simple truths of the religion common to all men, the metaphysical essence of which is that the Spirit of God lives in man, and the practical rule of which is that man should act toward others as he wishes others to act toward himself, — for the whole life of mankind to change of itself.

If instead of the faith that children are now taught and adults are confirmed in, that God sent His Son to redeem the sins of Adam, and to establish His Church which must be obeyed, and the consequent rule that one should pray and bring offerings at certain times and at certain places, and refrain from a given food at a given time and on certain days from work, — if instead of this they were taught and confirmed in the faith that God is a Spirit whose image lives in us, the power of which we can increase by our conduct; — if only they were taught this and all that naturally follows from these principles, in the same way that they are taught at present those unnecessary legends, about impossible events and the rules of the senseless rituals which follow from such tales, — then, instead of irrational strife and separation, very soon, without the help of diplomatists, international law, peace congresses, political economists, and socialists of all sections, a peaceful, friendly, happy life would come about for humanity, directed by this sole religion.

But nothing of the sort is attempted: not only is the deceit of false religion not destroyed and the true religion not preached, but on the contrary more and more men farther and farther recede from the possibility of accepting the truth.

The chief reason why people do not do what is so natural, necessary, and possible, is that men of to-day, owing to a prolonged irreligious life, have become so accustomed to organize and establish their mode of liv-

ing by violence, — bayonets, bullets, prisons, gallows, — that they imagine such an order of life is not only normal, but that no other is possible. Not only those to whom the existing order is advantageous think this, even those who suffer from it are so stupefied by the hypnotic influence practised upon them that they also regard violence as the only means of securing good order in human society. And yet more than anything else this organization and establishment of social life by violence removes men from the possibility of understanding the causes of their sufferings, and therefore from the possibility of true order; — like an incapable or ill-intentioned doctor when he drives inward a virulent eruption, thus not only deceiving the patient by his action, but increasing the disease itself and rendering a cure impossible.

To the rulers who have enslaved the masses and who think and say "After us, the Deluge," it appears very convenient, by the means of the army, the clergy, the police, and of the threats of bayonets, bullets, prisons, workhouses, gallows, to compel the enslaved people to continue to live in their stupefaction and slavery, and not to hinder the rulers from enjoying their position. And the rulers do this, and call it "right order," whereas nothing hinders true social order so much as this. In reality such an organization is not only not right order, but an organization of evil.

If the men of our world with the remnants of religious principles which still exist in the masses, had not continually before their eyes the crimes of those who had taken upon themselves the duty of conserving social order and social morality, — by wars, executions, prisons, taxation, the sale of intoxicants and opium, — they would never have dreamed of carrying out one hundredth part of those evil deeds, deceits, acts of violence, murders, which they now carry out in the full persuasion that such deeds are good and natural.

The law of human life is of such a nature that the improvement of life, of the individual as well of society, is possible only by inward moral perfecting. Whereas

all the efforts of men to improve their life by external influence and coercion serve as the most effective propaganda and example of evil, and therefore fail not only to improve life, but on the contrary increase the evil, which, like a snowball, continually grows larger and larger, and more and more removes people from the only possibility of truly improving their life.

In proportion as the habit of violence and crimes practised under the guise of law by the custodians of order and morality themselves becomes more and more frequent and cruel, and is justified in greater measure by the inculcation of falsehood uttered as religion, people become more and more firmly established in the idea that the law of their life is not love and mutual service, but struggle and the devouring of each other.

And the more they become confirmed in this idea, which lowers them to the plane of animals, the more difficult is it for them to awaken from that hypnotic influence to which they are subjected, and to accept as the basis of life that true religion of our time common to all humanity.

A vicious circle is established. The absence of religion renders an animal life founded on violence possible, and this animal life founded on violence renders more and more impossible liberation from the hypnotic influence and the assimilation of true religion. And this is why people do not do what is natural, possible, and necessary in our time: do not destroy the deceit of the semblance of religion and do not accept and preach the true religion.

CHAPTER XVI

Is any issue out of this enchanted circle possible, and where is it?

It seems at first that the Governments, having taken upon themselves the duty of guiding the life of nations for the welfare of the nations, ought to lead men out of the circle. So those who have endeavored to replace the

order of life founded on violence by a rational one founded on mutual service and love have always thought. So also thought Christian reformers, as well as the founders of the various theories of European Communism, and so also thought the famous Chinese reformer, Mi-Ti, who proposed to the Government to teach children in the schools not military sciences and exercies, and to give rewards to adults not for military exploits, but to teach children and adults the rules of respect and love, and to distribute prizes and encouragements for exploits of love.

And thus also many Russian religious reformers from the people have thought, whom I have known and of whom I now know many, from Sutaief to the old man who has already submitted a petition to the Emperor five times, begging him to command the canceling of the false religion and the preaching of true Christianity.

People naturally think that Governments who justify their existence by their care of national welfare must, in order to insure this welfare, desire to use that sole means which cannot in any way harm the people, but only produce the most fruitful results. But Governments have not only never and nowhere taken this duty upon themselves, but on the contrary have always and everywhere defended with the greatest jealousy the existing false and outlived religious teaching, and persecuted by every means those who have attempted to transmit to the people the foundations of true religion. And indeed it cannot be otherwise: for Governments to reveal the falsehood of the existing religion and to preach the true one would be like a man chopping the branch on which he is sitting.

But if Governments do not do this, it would seem that it certainly ought to be done by those men of science who, having freed themselves from the deceit of false religion, desire as they say to serve the people who have reared them. But these men, like the Governments, do not do this. Firstly, because they regard it as inexpedient to subject themselves to the unpleasant-

nesses and dangers of persecutions by the Governments for revealing the deceit upheld by the Governments, and which, according to the conviction of these men, will disappear of itself; secondly, because, regarding all religions as outlived errors, they have nothing to offer the people in the place of the deceit which they might overthrow.

There remain those great masses of unlearned people under the hypnotic influence of the Church and Government deceit, and who therefore regard the semblance of religion instilled into them as the only true religion, believing that there is not and cannot be any other. These masses are under the continual strenuous influence of hypnotism; generation after generation is born, lives, and dies in that stupefied state in which it is held by the priesthood and Government; and if any become freed from it, they inevitably drop into the scientific school, which denies religion, and their influence becomes as useless and harmful as the influence of their teachers.

So that for some it is disadvantageous, for others it is impossible.

CHAPTER XVII

It looks as if there were no issue.

And indeed for irreligious people there is and can be no issue from this position; people who belong to the higher ruling classes, even if they pretend that they are anxious about the welfare of the masses, will never (nor can they, being guided by worldly motives) seriously destroy that stupefaction and enslavement in which these masses live, and which give the higher classes the possibility of ruling over them. In the same way those also who belong to the enslaved, in like manner being guided by worldly motives, cannot desire to render worse their at present difficult position by struggling with the higher classes for the purpose of revealing the false teaching and preaching the true.

Neither have they any reason for doing so, and if they are intelligent men they never will do it.

But this is not so with religious people — those who, however depraved society may be, always by their lives preserve that sacred fire of religion without which human life could not exist. There are times (such is the present one) when these men are not seen, when, despised and humiliated by every one, they pass their lives obscurely, as with us in Russia, in exile, prisons, penal battalions, — but they exist, and on them depends the rational life of mankind. And it is these religious people, however few they may be, who alone can and will sever that enchanted circle in which men are riveted. These men can do this because all those disadvantages and dangers which prevent the worldly man from opposing the existing order of life, not only do not exist for the religious man, but increase his zeal in the struggle with falsehood, and in the profession by word and deed of that which he regards as divine truth. If he belongs to the ruling classes, he will not only not desire to conceal the truth out of regard to his advantageous position, but, on the contrary, having come to abhor these advantages, he will use all the powers of his soul to free himself from these advantages and to preach the truth, as he will no longer have any other object in life than that of serving God. If, on the other hand, he belongs to the enslaved, then, having likewise abandoned the desire common to people of his position, of bettering the conditions of his physical life, such a man will have no other object than the fulfilment of the will of God by revealing falsehood and professing the truth, and no sufferings or threats will any longer compel him to cease to live in accordance with that sole meaning which he has recognized in his life. Both the one and the other will act thus as naturally as the worldly man labors and undergoes privations for the possession of riches and for satisfying the ruler from whom he expects

advantages. Every religious man acts thus because the human soul enlightened by religion no longer lives merely by the life of this world as irreligious people live, but lives by the eternal, infinite life, for which sufferings and death in this life are as insignificant as the corns on his hand and the fatigue of his limbs are insignificant to a laborer plowing a field.

It is these people who will sever the enchanted circle in which men are now riveted. However few they may be, however low their social position, however weak they may be in education and intellect, these men, as surely as fire ignites the dry prairie, will ignite the whole world, — all the hearts of men dried up from a long period of irreligious life and thirsting for renovation.

Religion is not a faith established once for all in supernatural events, supposed to have taken place at some time or other, or in the necessity of certain prayers and rites; neither is it, as the scientists think, the remains of the superstitions of ancient unenlightenment which in our time have no significance or adaptation to life: Religion is the relation of man to eternal life, to God, in accordance with reason and contemporary knowledge, which alone moves man forward toward the end for which he is intended.

"The human soul is a lamp of God," says a wise Hebrew proverb. Man is a weak, miserable animal until in his soul there burns the fire of God. But when this fire kindles (and it kindles only in a soul illumined by religion) man becomes the most powerful being in the world. And this cannot be otherwise, because then it is no longer *his* power which works in him, but the power of God.

So this is what religion is, and in what its essence consists.

ON RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

(*January* 10, 1902)

I

IN Russia there are missionaries whose duty it is to convert into orthodoxy all who are not orthodox. At the end of 1901 a congress of such missionaries assembled in the town of Orel. Toward the close the *Maréchal de la Noblesse* of the district, Mr. Stakhovitch, uttered a speech in which he proposed that the Congress should recognize the complete liberty of conscience; implying by that term, as he expressed it, "not only liberty of belief, but also liberty of external manifestation, which includes the liberty of falling away from orthodoxy, and even of seducing others into heterodoxy." Mr. Stakhovitch considered that such liberty would only contribute to the triumph and spread of the orthodoxy in which he professed himself a believer.

The members of the Congress did not agree with Mr. Stakhovitch's proposal, and did not even discuss it. Later on an animated discussion and controversy ensued in the newspapers and periodicals as to whether the Orthodox Church should or should not be tolerant. Some — the majority of both the orthodox clergy and the laity — were opposed to tolerance, and recognized for one reason or another the impossibility of abandoning the persecution of the seceding members of the Church. Others — the minority — agreed with Stakhovitch's opinion, approved of him, and demonstrated the desirability and even the necessity for the Church itself of recognizing liberty of conscience.

Those who disagreed with Mr. Stakhovitch claimed

that the Church which gives men eternal welfare cannot but use all the measures at its disposal to save its feeble-minded members from eternal perdition, and that one of these measures is the establishment by the authorities of obstacles to secession from the true Church and to seduction of its members. But above all, they said, the Church which has received from God the power of binding and unbinding always knows what it is about when it employs violence against its enemies; whilst the reasoning of laymen about the justice or injustice of clerical action only demonstrates the error of worldly men in permitting themselves to condemn the actions of the Infallible Church.

Thus said, and are saying, the opponents of religious tolerance; whereas its advocates assert that it is unjust to oppose by force the profession of faiths in disagreement with orthodoxy, and that the distinctions drawn by the opponents of religious tolerance between belief and its external expression have no foundation, as every belief must inevitably be expressed in external actions.

Besides this, said they, for the true Church, which has for its source Christ and his promise that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it," there can be no danger from the preaching of a small number of heretics or seceders; and the more so that persecutions themselves do not attain their object, as martyrdom only weakens the moral authority of the persecuting Church and increases the strength of the persecuted.

II

The supporters of religious tolerance say that the Church should in no cases use violence against its dissenting members and the professors of other faiths. The Church should not use violence! But here the question involuntarily suggests itself: How can the Church use violence?

"*The Christian Church*," according to the definition it assumes itself, "*is a society of men established by God*

and having for its object the transmission to mankind of the true faith which saves them both in this world and in the world to come."

How, then, can such a society of men, possessing as its instruments grace and doctrine, desire to and actually commit violence toward those who do not acknowledge its tenets?

To advise the Church not to persecute seceders or those who seduce its members is exactly like recommending an academy of scientists not to have recourse to persecutions, exiles, executions, and so on, of those who disagree with its opinions. An academy of scientists *cannot* desire to do so, and even if it did it could not do these things, as it does not possess the necessary instruments. So also with the Church. The Christian Church, according to its very definition, *cannot* desire to use violence against those who disagree with it, and even if it did so desire, it cannot commit the violence, as it does not possess the necessary instruments. What is the significance, then, of those persecutions which have been committed by the Christian Church since the time of Constantine, which continue yet, and which the supporters of religious tolerance advise the Church to abandon?

III

Mr. Stakhovitch, citing in his speech the words of Guizot about the necessity of freedom of conscience in religious teaching, quotes after these good and clear words the bad and confused words of Aksakoff, who substitutes the idea of *Church* for the idea of *Christian Religion*, and having committed this substitution, endeavors to prove the possibility and necessity of tolerance in the Church. But the Christian Religion and the Christian Church are not the same, and we have no right to suppose that what is natural to the Christian Religion is also natural to the Christian Church.

The Christian Religion is the highest consciousness of man of his relation to God to which humanity has

attained, ascending from the lowest to the highest step of religious consciousness. And therefore the Christian Religion, and all men professing the true Christian Religion, knowing that man has attained to a certain degree of clearness and height of religious consciousness, thanks only to the unceasing progress of mankind from darkness to light, cannot be intolerant. Acknowledging themselves in possession only of a certain degree of truth, which continually more and more clarifies itself, rising by the common efforts of humanity, — the professors of the true Christian Religion when meeting beliefs new to them and disagreeing with their own, not only refrain from condemning and rejecting such faiths, but gladly greet, study, reëxamine, according to them their own belief, reject what disagrees with reason, accept what clarifies and elevates the truth they profess, and are still more confirmed in what is common to all faiths.

Such is the nature of the Christian Religion in general, and thus act those who profess true Christianity. But not so with the Church. The Church, recognizing itself as the only keeper of the full, divine, eternal, forever unchangeable truth disclosed to men by God Himself, cannot but regard every declaration of religious teaching expressed otherwise than in its own dogmas as a lying, pernicious teaching (even intentionally evil when it proceeds from those who know the tenets of the Church) which draws men into eternal perdition. And therefore, according to its own definition, the Church cannot be tolerant and cannot refrain from using against all expressions and all preachers of faiths which disagree with itself all those means which it regards as in line with its position. So that the Christian Religion and the Christian Church are completely different conceptions. It is true that every Church asserts that it is the only representative of Christianity; but the Christian Religion, that is, the profession of the free Christian Religion, by no means admits that the Church is the representative of Christianity. Adherents to the Christian Religion even cannot do so, as there are many Churches, and each one regards itself as the only vessel

of the complete Divine Truth. It is this confusion of the two different conceptions, continually employed for various purposes by Churchmen, which accounts for the fact that all their arguments about the desirability of tolerance for the Church suffer from a common vagueness, pomposity, incompleteness, and entire want of persuasiveness.

Such are all the arguments about this subject in our country of the Homiakoffs, Samarins, Aksakoffs, and others, and from this same feature does Mr. Stakhovitch's speech suffer. It is all not only empty but also harmful gossip, again blowing incense smoke into the eyes of those who have just begun to free themselves from the deceit.

IV

So that the answer to the question: How the Church which defines itself as a society of men having for their object the preaching of the truth, and which has not and cannot have any instruments of violence, can use violence against the faiths which disagree with itself? is simply this: That the institution which calls itself the Christian Church is not a Christian institution, but a secular one; an organization disagreeing with Christianity, and, if anything, inimical to it.

When this thought came to me for the first time I did not believe it (so firmly, from childhood, is the reverence toward the sanctity of the Church instilled into all of us). I at first thought that this was a paradox, that in such a definition of the Church there was some mistake. But the more I examined this question from different sides the more certain it became to me that the definition of the Church as an organization not Christian but inimical to Christianity is an entirely exact definition, without which it is impossible to explain to oneself all those contradictions which are included in the past and present activities of the Church.

And, really, what is the Church? The communicants say that it is a society established by Christ, to which

has been confided the exclusive guardianship and interpretation of the indubitable Divine Truth, guaranteed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the members of Church; and that this witness of the Holy Ghost is transferred from generation to generation by the laying on of hands established by Christ.

But one need only carefully examine the data by which this is proved to become convinced that all these assertions are quite arbitrary.

Those two texts (in those writings which the Church regards as sacred), upon which rest the proofs of the establishment of the Church by Christ Himself, have not at all the meaning attributed to them. And by no means can they signify the establishment of the Church, as the very idea of "the Church" at the time of the writing of the Gospels, and still more at the time of Christ, did not even exist.

The third text upon which the exclusive right of the Church to teach divine truth is apt to be founded — the concluding verses of Mark and Matthew — are recognized as forgeries by all the experts of the Gospel manuscripts.

Even less can it be proved that the descent of the fiery tongues on the heads of the disciples, seen only by the disciples, demonstrates that all which was to be said, not only by these disciples, but also by all on whom they were to lay their hands, is said by God (that is, by the Holy Ghost), and therefore is an eternally unquestionable truth.

But, above all, even if this were proved (which is quite impossible), even then there is no possibility of proving that this gift of infallibility exists precisely in that Church which asserts it of itself. The chief and insoluble difficulty is that the Church is not One, and that every Church asserts that It alone is in the truth and all the others in error. So that, as a matter of fact, the assertion of each Church that it alone is in the truth has exactly as much weight as the assertion of any man who swears, "By God, I am right, and all who disagree with me are wrong."

"By God, we alone compose the true Church" — in this, and this alone, consists all the proof of the infallibility of any Church. Such a basis, while being both very unstable and false, has besides this defect, that, excluding all verification of anything preached by a Church claiming infallibility for itself, it opens a limitless field for every kind of the strangest fantasies taught as the truth. And when irrational and fantastic assertions are taught as the truth, then there naturally appear men who protest against such assertions. And in order to compel people to believe in irrational and fantastic assertions there is but one means — coercion.

The whole of the Nicene Creed is a network of irrational and fantastic assertions which could arise only amongst men who recognized themselves as infallible, and could spread only by compulsion.

"God the Father gave birth before Time to God the Son, from whom all emanated. This Son was sent into the world for the salvation of men, and there he was again born from a virgin, and was crucified, and arose, and ascended into heaven, where he is now sitting on the right hand of the Father. And at the end of the world this Son will come to judge the living and the dead;" — and all this is an indisputable truth revealed by God Himself!

If we in the twentieth century cannot accept all these dogmas, contrary both to common sense and human knowledge, so also in the time of the Nicene Creed people were not deprived of common sense and could not agree with all these strange dogmas; and they expressed their disagreement with them. And the Church, regarding itself in the sole possession of the full truth, could not admit this disagreement, and naturally used the most peremptory means against this denial and its diffusion — coercion. Admitting the use of violence in certain cases, as, for instance, in war and punishments, the Church naturally regarded as even more permissible and lawful the use of violence against

men who by their false teaching thrust others into eternal perdition.

The Church, united to power, has always used violence — concealed violence, but nevertheless most decided and effective. It gathered taxes from every one by violence without inquiring whether they agreed or not with the established faith, but demanding of all its profession.

Having this money collected by coercion it organized with it a most powerful instrument of hypnotism for the purpose of establishing amongst children and adults its own faith alone. And when this instrument was not sufficient it used its power to coerce directly. So that in a Church supported by the State there can be no mention of religious tolerance.

And this cannot be otherwise while Churches are Churches.

It will be said that Churches like the Quakers, Wesleyans, Shakers, Mormons, and at the present time especially Roman Catholics, collect money from their members without using the power of coercion, and therefore do not use violence to support themselves. But this is incorrect: the money collected by wealthy people, and especially by Roman Catholic congregations during ages of paid hypnotism, are not free gifts of their members, but result from coercion in its crudest form. Money is always collected by the aid of coercion and is always the tool of coercion. Before a Church can regard itself as tolerant it must be free from all monetary influence. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

V

The Church, as a matter of fact, does *not* possess instruments of violence. Violence, if it is used, is used not by the Church itself, but by the power with which the Church is united. And therefore the question arises: Why do the Governments and ruling

classes support the Church? It would seem that the beliefs preached by the Church ought to be indifferent to the Governments and the ruling classes. It would seem that it ought to be just the same to the Governments and ruling classes whatever the peoples they govern believe: whether they are Protestants, Catholics, Greek-Orthodox, Mohammedan. But this is not so. In all times religious beliefs correspond to the social organization; that is, social organization develops according to religious beliefs. And therefore: As the religious belief of the peoples, so is the social organization. This the Governments and ruling classes know, and therefore they always support that religious teaching which corresponds to their advantageous position. The Governments and ruling classes know that the true Christian religion repudiates power founded on violence, repudiates the distinction of classes, the accumulation of riches, executions, wars — all by which the Governments and ruling classes occupy their advantageous position. Therefore they find it necessary to support that faith which justifies their position. And Christianity, perverted by the Churches, does this, and in addition affords the advantage that, having perverted *true* Christianity, it conceals from men the approach to it.

The Governments and ruling classes could not exist without the perversion of Christianity, which is called the Church Faith. The Church with its deceit could not exist without the help of direct or indirect coercion on the part of the Governments and the ruling classes. In some states this coercion shows itself in persecutions, in others in the exclusive patronage by the wealthy ruling classes. And the possession of riches is possible only by violence. And therefore the Church and the Governments and the ruling classes mutually uphold each other. So that the opponents of religious tolerance are quite right in defending violence and persecution, upon which depends the existence of the Church. While the advocates of tolerance would be right only if they applied not to the Church but to the

State, and demanded what is incorrectly termed *the separation of Church from State*, but which in reality is only the cessation of the exclusive Governmental support by direct violence or indirectly by subsidizing any one particular faith.

But to demand from the Church that it should abandon coercion in any form whatever is like demanding of a foe besieged on all sides that he should disarm and give himself up into the hands of his enemies.

Only true, free Christianity, untrammeled by any worldly institutions, and therefore afraid of nothing and no one, and having for its aim only the greater and greater knowledge of the divine truth and its greater and greater realization in life, can be tolerant.

"NOTES FOR OFFICERS"

(*December* 20, 1901)

"It is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him through whom they come." — LUKE xvii. 1, 2.

IN all Russian barracks there hang, nailed to the wall, the so-called "Notes for Soldiers"[1] composed by General Dragomiroff. These notes are a collection of stupidly braggart sentences intermixed with blasphemous citations from the Gospels, and written in an artificial barrack slang, which is, in reality, quite strange to every soldier. The Gospel citations are quoted in order to corroborate the statements that soldiers should kill and tear with their teeth the enemy: "If your bayonet breaks, strike with your fists; if your fists give way, bite with your teeth." The notes conclude with the statement that God is the soldiers' General: "God is your General."

Nothing illustrates more convincingly than these notes that terrible degree of unenlightenment, servile submissiveness, and brutality which Russian men have attained to at present. Since this most horrible blasphemy appeared and was first hung up in all the barracks (a considerable time ago), not one commander, nor priest — whom this distortion of the meaning of the Gospel texts would seem to concern directly — has expressed any condemnation of this obnoxious work, and it continues to be published in millions of copies and to be read by millions of soldiers who accept this dreadful production as a guide to their conduct.

These notes revolted me long ago, and now, being

[1] "Notes for Soldiers" (Soldatskaya Pamiatka), by General Dragomiroff, 19th ed. See p. 73. — EDS.

afraid I may otherwise miss the opportunity of doing so before my death, I have now written an appeal to soldiers,[1] in which I have endeavored to remind them that as men and Christians they have quite other duties toward God than those put forward in the notes. And a similar reminder is required, I think, not only by soldiers, but still more so by officers (by "officers" I mean all military authorities, from Subalterns to Generals), who enter the military service or continue in it, not by compulsion as privates do, but by their own free will. It was pardonable a hundred or fifty years ago, when war was regarded as an inevitable condition of the life of nations, when the men of the country with whom one was at war were regarded as barbarians, without religion, and evil-doers, and when it did not enter the mind of military men that they were required for the suppression and "pacification" of one's own people, — it was pardonable then to put on a multi-colored uniform trimmed with gold braid and to saunter about with a clashing sword and jingling spurs, or to caracole in front of one's regiment, imagining oneself a hero, who, if he has not yet sacrificed his life for the defense of his fatherland, is nevertheless ready to do so. But at the present time, when frequent international communications, commercial, social, scientific, artistic, have so brought nations in touch with one another that any contemporary international war is like a dispute in a family, and breaks the most sacred human ties, — when hundreds of peace societies and thousands of articles, not only in special but also in the ordinary newspapers, unceasingly demonstrate from every side the senselessness of militarism, and the possibility, even necessity, of abolishing war; — at the present time, when, above all, the military are more and more often called out, not against foreign foes to repel invasions, or for the aggrandizement of the glory and power of their country, but against unarmed factory workmen or peasants, — at the present time to caracole on one's

[1] See p. 67. — Eds.

little horse in one's little embroidered uniform and to advance dashingly at the head of one's company, is no longer a silly, pardonable piece of vanity as it was before, but something quite different.

In past times, in the days say of Nicholas I., it entered into no one's head that troops are necessary chiefly to shoot at unarmed populaces. But at present troops are permanently stationed in every large town and manufacturing centre for the purpose of being ready to disperse gatherings of workmen; and seldom a month passes without soldiers being called out of their barracks with ball cartridges and hidden in secret places in readiness to shoot the populace down at any moment.

The use of troops against the people has become indeed not only customary, — they are mobilized in advance to be in readiness for this very purpose; and the Governments do not conceal the fact that the distribution of recruits in the various regiments is intentionally conducted in such a way that the men are never drafted into a regiment stationed in the place from which they are drawn. This is done for the purpose of avoiding the possibility of soldiers having to shoot at their own relations.

The German Emperor, at every fresh call for recruits, has openly declared and still declares that soldiers who have been sworn in belong to him, body and soul; that they have only one foe — his foe; and that this foe are the Socialists (that is, workmen), whom the soldiers must, if he bids them, shoot down (*niederschiessen*), even if they should be their own brothers or even parents.

In past times, moreover, if the troops were used against the people, those against whom they were used were, or at all events were supposed to be, evil-doers, ready to kill and ruin the peaceful inhabitants, and whom therefore it might be supposed to be necessary to destroy for the general good. But at present every one knows that those against whom troops are called out are for the most part peaceful, industrious men, who merely desire to profit unhindered by the fruits of their labors. So that the principal permanent function of

the troops in our time no longer consists in an imaginary defense against irreligious and in general external foes, and not against internal foes in the persons of riotous evil-doers, but in killing one's own unarmed brothers, who are by no means evil-doers, but peaceful, industrious men whose only desire is that they shall not be deprived of their earnings. So that military service at the present time, when its chief object is, by murder and the threat of murder, to keep enslaved men in those unjust conditions in which they are placed, is not only not a noble but a positively dastardly undertaking. And therefore it is indispensable that officers who serve at the present time should consider whom they serve, and ask themselves whether what they are doing is good or evil.

I know that there are many officers, especially of the higher grades, who by various arguments on the themes of orthodoxy, autocracy, integrity of the State, eternal inevitableness of war, necessity of order, inconsistency of socialistic ravings, and so on, try to prove to themselves that their activity is rational and useful, and contains nothing immoral. But in the depths of their soul they themselves do not believe in what they say, and the more intelligent and the older they become the less they believe.

I remember how joyously I was struck by a friend and old comrade of mine, a very ambitious man, who had dedicated his whole life to the military service, and had attained the highest honors and grades (General Aides-de-Camp and Major-General), when he told me that he had burnt his "Memoirs" of the wars in which he had participated because he had changed his view of the military activity, and now regarded every war as an evil deed, which should not be encouraged by participation, but, on the contrary, should be discredited in every way. Many officers think the same, although they do not say so while they serve. And indeed no thoughtful officer can think otherwise. Why, one has only to recall to mind what forms the occupation of all officers, from the lowest to the highest — to the Commandant of an Army Corps. From the beginning to the end of their

service — I am alluding to officers in the active service — their activity, with the exception of the few and short periods when they go to war and are occupied with actual murder, consists in the attainment of two aims: in teaching soldiers the best methods of killing men, and in accustoming them to an obedience which enables them to do mechanically, without argument, everything their commander orders. In olden times it used to be said, "Flog two to death, and train one," and so they did. If at present the proportion of flogged to death is smaller, the principle nevertheless is the same. One cannot reduce men into that state, not of animals but of machines, in which they will commit the deed most repulsive to the nature of man and to the faith he professes, namely, murder, at the bidding of any commander, — unless not only artful frauds but also the most cruel violence have been perpetrated on them. And so it is in practice.

Not long ago a great sensation was created in the French press by the disclosure by a journalist of those awful tortures to which soldiers in the Disciplinary Battalions are submitted on the Island of Obrou, six hours' distance from Paris. The men punished have their hands and feet tied together behind their back and are then thrown to the ground; instruments are fixed on their thumbs while their hands are twisted behind their backs, and screwed up so that every movement produces a dreadful pain; they are hung with their legs upward; and so forth.

When we see trained animals accomplishing things contrary to nature: dogs walking on their fore legs, elephants rolling barrels, tigers playing with lions, and so on, we know that all this has been attained by the torments of hunger, whip, and red-hot iron. And when we see men in uniforms with rifles standing motionless, or performing all together the same movement, — running, jumping, shooting, shouting, and so on, — in general, producing those fine reviews and manœuvers which emperors and kings so admire and show off one before the other, we know the same. One cannot cauterize

out of a man all that is human and reduce him to the state of a machine without torturing him, and torturing not in a simple way but in the most refined, cruel way, — at one and the same time torturing and deceiving him.

And all this is done by you officers. In this all your service consists, from the highest grade to the lowest, with the exception of those rare occasions when you participate in real war.

A youth transported from his family to the other end of the world comes to you, after having been taught that that deceptive oath forbidden by the Gospel which he has taken irretrievably binds him, — as a cock when laid on the floor with a line drawn over its nose and along the floor thinks that it is bound by that line, — he comes to you with complete submissiveness and the hope that you his elders, men more intelligent and learned than he, will teach him all that is good. And you, instead of freeing him from those superstitions which he has brought with him, inoculate him with new, most senseless, coarse, and pernicious superstitions: about the sanctity of the banner, the almost divine position of the Tsar, the duty of absolute obedience to the authorities. And when with the help of the methods for stultifying men which are elaborated in your organization you reduce him to a position worse than animal, to a position where he is ready to kill every one he is ordered to kill, even his unarmed brothers, you exhibit him with pride to your superiors, and receive in return their thanks and rewards. It is terrible to be a murderer oneself, but by cunning and cruel methods to reduce one's confiding brothers to this state is the most terrible crime of all. And this you accomplish, and in this consists the whole of your service.

It is therefore not astonishing that amongst you more than amongst any other class everything which will stifle conscience flourishes: smoking, cards, drunkenness, depravity; and that suicides occur amongst you more frequently than anywhere else.

"It is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him through whom they come."

You often say that you serve because if you did not the existing order would be destroyed and disturbances and every kind of calamities would occur.

But firstly, it is not true that you are concerned with the maintenance of the existing order: you are concerned only with your own advantages.

Secondly, even if your abstinence from military service did destroy the existing order, this would in no way prove that you should continue to do what is wrong, but only that the order which is being destroyed by your abstinence should be destroyed. Were establishments of the most useful kind — hospitals, schools, homes, to depend for their support on the profits from houses of ill-fame, no consideration of the good produced by these philanthropic establishments would retain in her position the woman who desired to free herself from her shameful trade.

"It is not my fault," the woman would say, "that you have founded your philanthropic institutions on vice. I no longer wish to live in vice. As to your institutions, they do not concern me." And so should every soldier say if the necessity of maintaining the existing order founded on his readiness to murder were put before him. "Organize the general order in a way that will not require murder," the soldier should say. "And then I shall not destroy it. I only do not wish to and cannot be a murderer."

Many of you say also: "I was educated thus. I am tied by my position, and cannot escape." But this also is not true.

You can always escape from your position. If, however, you do not, it is only because you prefer to live and act against your conscience rather than lose certain worldly advantages which your dishonest service affords. Only forget that you are an officer and recall to mind that you are a man, and the way of escape from your position will immediately disclose itself to you. This way of escape in its best and most honest form would consist in your calling together the men of whom you are in command,

stepping in front, and asking their pardon for all the evil you have done them by deception — and then cease to serve in the army. Such an action seems very bold, demanding great courage, whereas in reality much less courage is required for such an action than to storm a fortification or to challenge a man to a duel for an insult to the uniform, — which you as a soldier are always ready to do, and do.

But even without being capable of acting thus you can always, if you have understood the criminality of military service, leave it and give preference to any other activity though less advantageous.

But if you cannot do even this, then the solution for you of the question whether you will continue to serve or not will be postponed to that time — and this will soon appear for each one of you — when you will stand face to face with an unarmed crowd of peasants or factory workers, and be ordered to shoot at them. And then, if anything human remains in you, you will have to refuse to obey, and, as a result, to leave the service.

I know that there are still many officers, from the highest to the lowest ranks, who are so unenlightened or hypnotized that they do not see the necessity of either the one, the other, or the third solution, and quietly continue to serve even in the present conditions, ready to shoot at their brothers and even priding themselves upon this; but happily public opinion punishes such people with more and more repulsion and disapproval, and their number continually becomes smaller and smaller.

So that in our time, when the fratricidal function of the army has become evident, officers not only can no longer continue in the ancient traditions of military self-complacent bravado, — they cannot continue the criminal work of teaching murder to simple men confiding in them, and themselves to prepare for participation in murdering unarmed populaces, without the consciousness of their human degradation and shame.

It is this which should be understood and remembered by every thinking and conscientious officer of our time.

"NOTES FOR SOLDIERS"

(*December* 20, 1901)

"Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body."
— MATT. x. 28.

"We must obey God rather than men." — ACTS v. 29.

YOU are a soldier. You have been taught to shoot, to stab, to march, to do gymnastics. You have been taught to read and write, led to exercises and reviews; perhaps have been in a campaign and have fought with the Turks or Chinese, obeying all your orders. It has not even entered your head to ask yourself whether what you were ordered to do was good or bad.

But suddenly an order is received that your company or squadron shall march out, taking ball cartridges. You go without asking where you are being led.

You are brought to a village or factory, and you see before you gathered in an open space a crowd of villagers or factory hands, — men, women with children, aged folk. The governor and public prosecutor approach the crowd with policemen and say something. The crowd is at first silent, then begins to shout louder and louder; and the authorities retreat. And you guess that the peasants or factory hands are rioting, and that you have been brought to "pacify" them. The authorities several times retreat from the crowd and again approach it, but the shouts become louder and louder, and the authorities consult each other and at last give you the order to load your rifles with the ball cartridges. You see before you men such as those from amongst whom you have been taken, — men in peasants' coats, sheepskin overcoats, and bark shoes, and women in kerchiefs and jackets, — women like your wife and mother.

The first shot is ordered to be fired above the heads

of the crowd. But the crowd does not disperse, and shouts even louder; and you are then ordered to shoot in earnest, not over the heads, but straight into the middle, of the crowd.

It has been instilled into you that you are not responsible for the consequences of your shots. But you know that the man who falls bleeding from your shot is killed by you and by no one else, and you know that you could have refrained from shooting and that then the man would not have been killed.

What are you to do?

It would not be enough to lay down your rifle and refuse in this instance to shoot your brothers; for tomorrow the same thing could reoccur. And therefore, whether you wish it or not, you have to recollect yourselves and ask, "What is this soldier's calling which has brought me to the necessity of shooting my unarmed brothers?"

You are told in the Gospel that one should not only refrain from killing his brothers, but should not do that which leads to murder: one should not be angry with one's brothers, nor hate one's enemies, but love them.

In the law of Moses you are distinctly told, "Thou shalt not kill," without any reservations as to whom you can and whom you cannot kill. Whereas in the regulations which you have been taught you are told that a soldier must fulfil any order whatsoever of his superior, except an order against the Tsar; and in explanation of the Sixth Commandment you are told that although by this commandment killing is forbidden, yet he who kills an enemy during war does not sin against this commandment.[1] And in the "Notes for Soldiers" which hang in your barracks, and which you have many times read and listened to, it is explained how a soldier should kill men: "If three fall on you, shoot one, stab another, and

[1] In your regulations you are told: "By the Sixth Commandment God forbids the taking of man's life by violence or cunning, and the disturbance in any way of one's neighbor's peace and safety; and therefore this commandment also forbids quarrels, anger, hatred, jealousy, cruelty. But he who kills the enemy in war does not sin against the Sixth Commandment, because in war we defend our faith, sovereign, and country."

finish the third with the bayonet. . . . If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock; if the stock gives way, hit with your fists; if your fists are hurt, bite with your teeth."

You are told that you must kill, because you have taken the oath, and that not you but your commanders will be responsible for your actions.

But before you took the oath, that is, before you promised men to obey their will, it was your duty, without need of oaths, to obey in everything the will of God, of Him who gave you life; and God forbids killing.

So that you could by no means swear that you would obey everything men might command. This is why it is distinctly stated in the Gospel, Matt. v. 34–37: "Swear not at all. . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea; nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

And in the Epistle of James, chap. v. 12, the same thing is said, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth." So that to take the oath is a sin. As to what they say about your commanders, not yourselves, being responsible for your deeds, this is obviously a falsehood. Is your conscience not in you, but in your sergeant, captain, colonel, or some one else? No one can decide for you what you can and must, and what you cannot and should not do. And a man is always responsible for what he does. Is not the sin of adultery much easier than that of murder? and yet can one man say to another: "Go and commit adultery. I shall bear your sin, because I am your commander"?

According to the Biblical narrative Adam sinned against God, and then said that his wife told him to eat the apple, while his wife said she was tempted by the devil. God exonerated neither Adam nor Eve, but told them that because Adam listened to the voice of his wife he would be punished, and that his wife would be punished for listening to the serpent. And neither were excused, but both were punished. Will not God say the same to you also when you kill a man and say that your captain ordered you to do it?

The deceit is apparent already, because in the regu-

lation obliging a soldier to obey all his commander's orders, these words are added, "*Except such as tend toward the injury of the Tsar.*"

If a soldier before obeying the orders of his commander must first decide whether it is not against the Tsar, how then can he fail to consider before obeying his commander's order whether it is not against his supreme King, God? And no action is more opposed to the will of God than that of killing men. And therefore you *cannot* obey men if they order you to kill. If you obey, and kill, you do so only for the sake of your own advantage, — to escape punishment. So that in killing by order of your commander you are a murderer as much as the thief who kills a rich man to rob him. He is tempted by money, and you by the desire not to be punished, or to receive a reward. Man is always responsible before God for his actions. And no power, whatever the authorities desire, can turn a live man into a dead thing which one can move about as one likes. Christ taught men that they are all sons of God, and therefore a Christian cannot surrender his conscience into the power of another man, no matter by what title he may be called: King, Tsar, Emperor. As to those men who have assumed power over you, demanding of you the murder of your brothers, this only shows that they are deceivers, and that therefore one should not obey them. Shameful is the position of the prostitute who is always ready to give her body to be defiled by any one her master indicates; but yet more shameful is the position of a soldier always ready for the greatest of crimes — the murder of any man whom his commander indicates.

And therefore if you do indeed desire to act according to God's will you have only to do one thing — to throw off the shameful and ungodly calling of a soldier, and be ready to bear any sufferings which may be inflicted upon you for so doing.

So that the true "Notes" for a Christian Soldier are not those in which it is said that "God is the Soldiers' General" and other blasphemies, and that the

soldier must obey his commanders in everything, and be ready to kill foreigners and even his own unarmed brothers, — but those which remind one of the words of the Gospel that one *should obey God rather than men* and fear not those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

In this alone consists the true, unfraudulent "Notes for Soldiers."

In Dragomiroff's "Notes for Soldiers" three passages are quoted from the Gospels: John xv. 10–13 and Matthew x. 22, 39. From John the words of the 13th verse are quoted: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" evidently for the purpose of implying that soldiers fighting in battle should defend their comrades to the utmost of their strength.

These words however cannot possibly refer to military action, but mean exactly the reverse. In verses 10–13 it is said: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

So that the words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," do not at all mean that a soldier should defend his comrades, but that a Christian should be ready to surrender his life for the fulfilment of Christ's commandment that men should love one another. And therefore he should be ready to sacrifice his life rather than consent to kill men.

From Matthew the end of the 22d verse of the 10th chapter is quoted, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved," evidently in the sense that a soldier who fights bravely will be saved from the enemy. But again the meaning of this passage is not at all what the compiler wishes to attribute to it, but a contrary one.

The complete verse is: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

So that obviously this verse cannot relate to soldiers, soldiers not being hated by any one for Christ's name: and it is clear therefore that only those people can be hated for Christ's name who refuse in his name to do what the world demands of them, and, in the case in point, soldiers who disobey when murder is demanded of them.

Again, the end of the 39th verse of the 10th chapter of Matthew is quoted: "He that loseth his life shall find it," also in the sense that he who is killed in war will be rewarded in Heaven. But the sense is obviously not this. In the 38th verse it is said, "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me," and after this is added, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;" that is, that he who desires to safeguard his corporal life rather than fulfil the teaching of love will lose his true life, but he who does not safeguard his corporal life, but fulfils the teaching of love, will gain the true, spiritual, eternal life.

Thus all the three passages assert, not, as the compiler desired, that in obedience to the Authorities one should fight, and crush, and rend men with one's teeth, but, on the contrary, they all, like the whole Gospel, express one and the same thing, — that a Christian cannot be a murderer and therefore cannot be a soldier. And therefore the words, "A soldier is Christ's warrior," placed in the "Notes" after the Gospel verses, do not at all mean what the compiler imagines. It is true that a soldier, if he be a Christian, can and should be Christ's warrior, but he will be Christ's warrior, not when, obeying the will of those commanders who have prepared him for murder, he kills foreigners who have done him no harm, or even his own unarmed fellow-countrymen, but only when he renounces the ungodly and shameful calling of a soldier, in the name of Christ, — and fights not with external foes but with his own commanders

who deceive him and his brothers, and fights them, not with a bayonet, nor with his fists or teeth, but with humble reasonableness and readiness to bear all suffering and even death rather than remain a soldier, — that is, a man ready to kill any one whom his commanders indicate.

[The following are the "Notes for Soldiers" by General Dragomiroff to which Tolstoï alludes. — Eds.]

"Notes for Soldiers" (Soldatskaya Pamiatka), by General Dragomiroff

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." — John xv. 13.
"He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." — Matt. x. 22.
"He that loseth his life shall find it." — Matt. x. 39.

A soldier is Christ's warrior. As such he should regard himself, and so he should behave.

Consider your corps as your family; your commander as your father; your comrade as your brother; your inferior as a young relative. Then all will be happy and friendly and easy.

Don't think of yourself, think of your comrades; they will think of you. Perish yourself, but save your comrade.

Under fire advance in open order; attack together.

Strike with your fist, not with your open hand.

One leg helps the other, one hand strengthens the other. Stick together. One evil is not an evil; two evils are half an evil; separation is the evil.

Don't expect relief. It won't come. Support will come. When you've thrashed them well, then you'll rest.

Only he is beaten who is afraid.

Always attack, never defend.

If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock; if the stock gives way, hit with your fists; if your fists are hurt, bite with your teeth. Only he wins who fights desperately, to the death.

In action a soldier is like a sentinel; even dying he should not let his rifle go.

Keep your bullet for three days, even for a whole campaign, when you can't get more. Shoot seldom, but well. With the bayonet strike hard. The bullet may miss the mark, but the bayonet will not. The bullet is stupid, the bayonet is the plucky one.

Aim every bullet; to shoot without care only amuses the devil. Only the careful not the chance bullet finds the culprit. Hold your cartridges. If you spend them a long way off, when you get near, just when you want them, you 'll have none. For a good soldier, thirty cartridges are enough for the hottest engagement.

From the dead and wounded take their cartridges.

If you knock up against the enemy unexpectedly or he against you, hit without hesitation. Don't let him collect himself. The plucky one is he who first cries "Hurrah." If three fall on you, shoot one, stab another, and finish the third with your bayonet. God defends the brave.

Where a bold one will get through, God will trip up the timid one.

For a good soldier there are neither flanks nor rear, but all is front, where the foe is.

Always keep your face toward the cavalry. Let it come to two hundred yards, give it a volley, put the bayonet into position, and freeze there.

In war a soldier must expect short commons, short sleep, and sore feet. Because it is war. Even an old soldier finds it difficult, and for a green one it is hard. But if it 's hard for you it is n't easier for the enemy; maybe harder still. Only you see your own hardships, but don't see the enemy's. Yet they are always there. So don't grow stale, but the harder it is, the more doggedly and desperately fight; when you 've won you 'll feel better at once, and the enemy worse. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

Don't think that victory can be won straight off. The enemy can also be firm. Sometimes one can't succeed even the second and third times. Go at it a fourth, a fifth, a sixth time, till you win.

When fighting help the sound men. Only think of

the wounded when you have won. The man who bothers about the wounded during the fight and leaves the ranks is a bad soldier and not a kind-hearted man. It is not his comrades who are dear to him but his own skin. If you win it will be well for all, both sound and wounded.

Don't leave your place on the march. If you stop for a minute and fall behind, hurry up and don't lag.

When you reach the bivouac all can't rest. Some must sleep, others guard. He who sleeps, let him sleep in peace till he is wakened; comrades are on guard. He who is on guard, let him watch alertly, though he has marched seventy miles.

When you are an officer, keep your men well in hand. Give your orders intelligently; don't merely cry "Forward, March." First explain what is to be done, so that every man can know where and why he has to go. Then "Forward, March" is all right. Every soldier should understand his actions.

"The chief gets the drink first, and the stick first."

Die for the Orthodox faith, for our father the Tsar, for Holy Russia. The Church prays to God. "He who loses his life will find it." He who survives, to him honor and glory.

Do not offend the native; he feeds and supports. A soldier is not a thief.

Keep yourself clean, your clothes and ammunition in order. Guard your rifle, your biscuits, and your feet as the apple of your eye. Look after your socks (leg bands) and keep them greased. It's better for the foot.

A soldier should be healthy, brave, hardy, determined, just, pious! Pray to God! From Him is the victory! Noble heroes, God leads you, He is your General!

Obedience, education, discipline, cleanliness, health, tidiness, vigor, courage, dash, victory! Glory, glory, glory!

Lord of Hosts, be with us! We have no other helper than Thee in the day of our trouble! Lord of Hosts, have mercy on us!

TRUE CRITICISM

(A Preface to a Russian Edition of the German Novel, "Der Bütnerbauer," by Von Polenz)

(1901)

LAST year a friend of mine in whose taste I have confidence gave me to read the German novel "Der Bütnerbauer" by Von Polenz. I read it and was surprised that such a work, having appeared two years ago, was known to hardly any one.

This novel is not one of those imitations of artistic work which are produced in such enormous quantities to-day, but a genuine work of art. It belongs neither to those descriptions, devoid of all interest, of persons and events brought into artificial connection merely because the author, having acquired command of the technique of artistic descriptions, desires to write a new novel; nor to those dissertations on a given theme, clothed in the form of drama or novel, which are also palmed off on the public to-day as artistic productions; nor yet does it belong to those other productions called decadent, which especially attract the modern public owing to the fact that they resemble the ravings of a madman, and present a kind of puzzle, the solution of which affords a pleasant occupation and is at the same time regarded as evidence of refinement.

This novel does not belong to either of these three classes: it is a true artistic production in which the author says what he has to say because he loves the subject of which he is speaking; and he expresses himself, not in arguments nor in cloudy allegories, but in the only way in which one can transmit an artistic sub-

ject: by poetic images, — and not fantastic, extraordinary, and incomprehensible images connected without inherent necessity, but images which represent the most ordinary simple persons and events, connected by inherent artistic necessity.

But more than this: it is not only genuinely artistic, it is also a fine piece of artistic work, uniting in the highest degree all the three essential points of a true work of art.

In the first place, its subject is important, as it deals with the life of the peasantry, that is, with that majority of mankind who are at the foundation of all social structures, and who are experiencing in our day, not only in Germany but in all European countries, an oppressive change in their ancient organization. (It is remarkable that almost at the same time as "Der Bütnerbauer" a very tolerable French novel by René Bazin, "La terre que meurt," appeared on the same theme, though of much less artistic merit.)

In the second place, it is written in a very masterly manner in an excellent German, which is particularly powerful when the author makes his characters speak in the rough, manly workingman's idiom.

And in the third place, it is penetrated with love toward the characters whom the author introduces.

For example, in one of the chapters there is a description of how, after a night passed with comrades in drinking-shops, a husband returns home in the morning and knocks at his door. The wife looks out of the window, recognizes her husband, loads him with abuse, and is deliberately slow in letting him in. When at last she opens the door, the husband tumbles in and wants to enter the living room; but the wife tries to prevent him so that the children may not see their father in a drunken state, and pushes him back. He clutches hold of the door-jambs and struggles with her. Generally a quiet man, he suddenly becomes furiously angry (the reason being that the day before she had taken from his pocket some money given him by some one and had concealed it), and in his turn he throws

himself upon her, catches her by the hair, and demands his money.

"I won't give it up for anything!" she repeats in answer to his demands, endeavoring to free herself from him.

Then, losing his head completely, he strikes her at random.

"I will die before I give it up," she says.

"But you shall," he shouts, knocking her off her feet and falling down upon her himself, continuing to claim his money. Receiving no answer, in his insane drunken malice he wants to strangle her. But the sight of blood oozing from beneath her hair and trickling down her forehead and nose arrests him. He is afraid of what he has done, leaves her on the floor, staggers to his bed, and falls down upon it.

The scene is truthful and terrible. But the author loves his characters, and adds one little detail which suddenly illuminates the whole with so bright a ray of light that it forces the reader not only to pity but to love these people, notwithstanding all their coarseness and cruelty. The stricken wife comes to herself, gets up from the floor, wipes the blood from her forehead with a corner of her dress, opens the door, quietens her screaming children, and then looks round for her husband. He is lying on the bed as he fell, but his head is hanging down the side and the blood is rushing into it. The wife approaches him and carefully lifts his head, lays it on the pillow, and then rearranges her dress and disentangles from her head a handful of hair which her husband had torn out.

Dozens of pages of argument could not convey what is expressed in this detail.

Here is revealed to the reader at one and the same time both the consciousness, educated by tradition, of wifely duty, and the triumph of a maintained resolution not to surrender money necessary, not for herself, but for the family. Here we have both injury and forgiveness, pity, and, if not love, the recollection of love toward one's husband, the father of one's children. But more

than this. Such a detail, illuminating the inner life of this wife and this husband, throws a light for the reader upon the inner life of millions of similar husbands and wives, both of those who lived before, and who live now. It calls forth not only respect and love toward these men and women, crushed by labor, but also forces one to reflect on the reason why such people, strong in body and spirit, with such possibilities of a good and loving life, are so neglected, downtrodden, and unenlightened.

And such true artistic features, produced only by love toward the subject of which the author writes, are to be met with in every chapter of this book.

This novel is undoubtedly a fine work of art, as every one who reads it will agree, and yet although it appeared nearly three years ago and although a translation was published in one of our best Russian periodicals, it has passed quite unnoticed both in Russia and Germany. I have inquired about this book of several German literary men I have met lately; they had heard the name of Polenz but had not read his novel, although they had all read Zola's last novels and Kipling's stories and Ibsen's dramas, and D'Annuncio, and even Maeterlinck.

Twenty years ago Matthew Arnold wrote an excellent article about the object of criticism. In his opinion the object of criticism consists in finding what is most important and good amidst all that has been written in any place and at any time, and in drawing the attention of readers to this important and good.

Such a criticism, in our day, when people are being drowned in a flood of newspapers, journals, books, and the development of the art of advertising, appear to me not only necessary — the whole future of the enlightenment of the cultured class of our European world even depends upon whether such a criticism will appear and become authoritative.

The overproduction of any article is harmful; but the overproduction of articles which represent not an end but a means is especially harmful, when this means is regarded as an end.

Horses and carriages as means of locomotion, houses

and clothes as means of shelter, good food as the means of maintaining the strength of one's organism, are all very useful. But as soon as people begin to regard the possession of such means as ends in themselves, believing it good to have as many horses, houses, clothes, and foods as possible, — then these things become not only not useful but distinctly harmful. So it has happened with the production of books in the well-to-do circle of our European society. For a long time past, in the well-to-do circle, the publication of books, which is undoubtedly useful for the great insufficiently educated masses, has been the chief organ for the dissemination of ignorance, and not of enlightenment.

It is very easy to become convinced of this. In our day, books, magazines, and especially newspapers have become great financial undertakings, for the success of which the greatest possible number of consumers is necessary. The interests and tastes of the majority of consumers being always low and coarse, it is necessary, to secure success, that the literary productions shall be concerned with low interests and correspond to low tastes; that is, shall meet the demands of the majority. And the press completely satisfies these demands, which it has the full possibility of doing, as amongst its workers there are always many more with the same low interests and coarse tastes as the public, than with lofty interests and refined tastes. And as these individuals receive ample remuneration for the works they supply to meet the tastes of the masses, owing to the development of book-printing and the new methods of speculating in magazines, newspapers, and books, — that terrible and ever increasing flood of printed paper has appeared which by its volume alone, to say nothing of its contents, presents an immense obstacle to enlightenment.

If, in our day, an intelligent young man from the ranks who wished to educate himself were to obtain access to all the books, journals, and newspapers, and left to himself to choose his reading, then all the chances are that, reading incessantly every day for ten years,

he would read only silly and immoral books. To come across a good book would be for him as improbable as to find a marked pea in a sackful. And the worst of it is that, continually reading bad works, his tastes and understanding would continually become more perverted, so that when he did light on a good work he would either not understand it at all, or misunderstand it.

Besides this, thanks to the eventualities and the skill of modern advertising, some poor works (such for instance as "The Christian," by Hall Caine, a novel false in its subject, and inartistic, which was purchased in enormous quantities) attain, like "Odol" and Pears' Soap, reputations unjustified by their merits. These great reputations continually force a greater number of people to read such books. And while the reputation of insignificant, often harmful, books continually increases like a snowball, a similar snowball, of greater and greater confusion of ideas, and an utter incapacity of understanding the merits of literary works, continually accumulates in the heads of the great majority of men. Therefore, in proportion to the greater and greater circulation of newspapers, magazines, and books, that is to say in general of the increase of book-printing, the level of merit descends lower and lower, and the great mass of the so-called educated public becomes deeper and deeper immersed in the most hopeless, self-complacent, and therefore incurable, ignorance.

In my memory, during the last fifty years, a striking degradation of the taste and common sense of the reading public has taken place. One can see this degradation in all the fields of literature, but I will indicate only a few of the most marked examples known to me. In Russian poetry, for instance, after Pushkin, Lermontoff (Tutcheff is generally forgotten), poetic reputation passed first to the very doubtful poets, Maikoff, Polonsky, Fet; then to Nekrassoff, altogether devoid of poetic talent; then to the artificial and prosaic rhymester Alexis Tolstoï; then to the monotonous and weak Nadson; then to the completely giftless Apouhtin; and

then everything is muddled, and rhymesters appear whose name is legion, who do not know what poetry is, what is the meaning of their writings, nor why they write.

Another striking example is that of the English prose writers: From the great Dickens one descends first to George Eliot, then to Thackeray, from Thackeray to Trollope, and after that begin the indifferent fabrications of Collins, Kiplings, Rider Haggards, and so on. The same, in a yet more striking way, is seen in American literature: after the great Pleiad of Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Whittier, and others, there is a sudden break, and beautiful editions with beautiful illustrations appear, containing stories and novels which it is impossible to read for the want of any matter in them.

In our day the ignorance of the educated crowd has already reached the stage when all true great thinkers, poets, prose writers, both of antiquity and of the nineteenth century, are regarded as out of date and no longer capable of satisfying the refined and lofty demands of new humanity; they all are regarded with contempt or with a smile of condescension. The immoral, coarse, bombastic, disjointed prattle of Nietzsche is accepted to-day as the last word of philosophy; a senseless, artificial combination of words connected only by rhyme and rhythm, in various decadent verse, is regarded as poetry of the highest order; in all the theatres plays are given the sense of which is comprehensible to no one, not excepting the author; and novels which contain neither subject nor art are printed and disseminated in millions of copies under the pretext of being works of art.

"What am I to read to complete my education?" a young man or girl asks, upon leaving the higher school. The man from the ranks who has learnt to read and to understand what he reads, and is in search of true enlightenment, asks the same.

The naïve attempt to inquire of distinguished men the hundred books they regard as best is of course insufficient to answer such questions.

Nor is any help afforded by the division, current in our European society and tacitly accepted by every one, of all writers into categories of the first, second, third, etc., orders; into geniuses, men of great talent, talent, merely clever. Such a division not only fails to assist the true understanding of the merits of literature, and the discovery of what is good in the sea of what is bad, but even hinders it. And besides the fact that this division into categories is itself very often mistaken, and is upheld only because it was established long ago and is accepted by every one, — besides this, such a division is harmful because writers who are recognized as of the highest order produce some very bad works, and those of the lowest order some admirable ones. So that the man who accepts the division of writers into categories and the idea that all a first-rate writer produces is excellent, and that all the productions of a man of a lower category, or quite unknown, are necessarily weak, such a man becomes confused in his appreciations, and is deprived of much that is useful and truly enlightening.

Only true criticism can answer the most important question to-day of the youth of the cultured classes who is in search of knowledge, or of the man from the ranks who is in search of enlightenment. Not the criticism existing to-day, the aim of which is to praise the works which have become famous and to invent for their justification cloudy philosophico-esthetic theories. Not the criticism which is occupied in ridiculing, more or less humorously, works considered bad, or those of another camp. And still less the criticism, established and still flourishing amongst us, which has for its object the definition of the direction in which society as a whole is moving, founded on types described by various authors, and in general of expressing the critic's own economic and political views under the guise of reviews of literary works.

The answer to the stupendously important question: What is one to read out of all that is written? can be given only by true criticism, — that criticism whose object, as Matthew Arnold says, is to bring forward and

point out to men all that is best both in past and present writers.

From the event whether such a criticism, — disinterested, independent of any party, understanding and loving art, will appear, or not, and whether its authority will be great enough to overcome the commercial puffing of books — depends, in my opinion, the solution to the question whether the last glimmering of enlightenment will perish in our so-called cultured European society before it has spread amongst the masses; or whether it will revive, as it did in the Middle Ages, and spread amongst the majority of the people, who are now deprived of all enlightenment.

The public ignorance of Polenz's fine novel, as well as of many other good works that are drowned in the sea of printed rubbish, while senseless, insignificant, and even absolutely objectionable literary works are discussed on all sides from every point of view, always praised, and dispersed by the million, has called forth these thoughts in me, and I profit by this occasion, which will hardly present itself to me again, of expressing them, however briefly.

THE ONLY MEANS

(*August*, 1901)

"All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them : for this is the law and the prophets." — MATT. vii. 12.

I

THERE are more than a thousand millions of working-men in the world. All the bread, all the goods of the whole world, all wherewith people live and are rich, all this is produced by the working-man. But it is not he who profits by the things he produces, but the Government and the rich, — whereas the working population lives in continual need, ignorance, and bondage, and in the contempt of those very people whom they clothe, feed, house, and serve.

The land is taken from the laborer and regarded as the property of those who do not work it, so that in order to be fed by the land the man who works it must do everything the owners demand. If the laborer leaves the land, and enters service or mills or factories, he falls into bondage to other wealthy people, for whom during the whole of his life he has to work ten, twelve, fourteen or more hours a day, at alien, monotonous, tedious work, often pernicious to health and life. If he is able to settle on the land or to procure work so as to feed himself without want, then he is not left alone, but taxes are demanded of him, and in addition he himself is taken for three, four, five years into military service, or is forced to pay taxes for military purposes. If he desires to use the land without payment, or to arrange strikes, or to hinder other workmen from occupying his place, or if he refuses to pay taxes, then troops are

sent against him, he is wounded, killed, and compelled by force to work and to pay just as before.

So that the working-men all over the world live, not like men, but like beasts of burden who are compelled all their life to do not what is necessary to them, but to their oppressors, receiving in return only just so much food, clothing, and rest as enables them to go on working unceasingly. Whereas that small group of people who dominate the laborers, profiting by all they produce, live in idleness and insane luxury, uselessly and immorally squandering the labor of millions.

And thus the majority of the population of the whole world lives, not in Russia only, but also in France, and in Germany, and in England, and in China, and in India, and in Africa: everywhere. Whose fault is this? And how shall this be put right? Some say that it is the fault of those who possess the land without working it, and that it is necessary to give the land to the workers; others say that it is the fault of the rich who own the instruments of labor, that is, factories and mills, and that it is necessary that the factories and mills shall become the property of the workmen. Others again say that the whole organization of life is to blame, and that it is necessary to change this organization altogether.

Is this true?

II

About five years ago, during the coronation of Nicholas II. at Moscow, the people were offered a free supply of beer, brandy, and buns. When the crowd proceeded to the place where these things were being distributed, a crush ensued. Those in front were knocked off their feet by those behind, and these were crushed by those yet farther back; and no one seeing what was happening in front, they all kept pushing and pressing each other on. The weak were overthrown by the strong, and then the strong ones themselves, suffocated by the crush and want of air, also fell to the ground and were trampled by those who were

pushed from behind and could not halt. And thus several thousand people, old and young, men and women, were crushed to death.

When it was all over people began to argue as to who was to blame for it. Some said it was the police; others the organizers; others that the fault was the Tsar's, who had initiated the silly device of such an entertainment. People accused every one except themselves. And yet it would appear clear that only those were to blame who, in order to obtain a handful of cake and a pot of beer before their neighbors, rushed forward without paying attention to the others, and hustled and trampled them.

Is not the same thing taking place with the working people? They are exhausted, crushed, enslaved, only because for some miserable advantage they themselves ruin their own lives and those of their brothers.

The laborers complain of the landlords, of the Governments, of the factory owners, of the military. But the landowners exploit land, the Governments collect taxes, factory owners dispose of the workmen, and the troops suppress strikes, only because the laborers themselves not only help the landowners, the Government, the factory owners, the troops, but they themselves do all those things of which they complain. If a landowner can profit by thousands of acres of land without cultivating it himself, it is only because the workmen, for their own profit, go to work for him, and serve him as watchmen, keepers, foremen. So also the Government collects taxes from the workmen only because they themselves, attracted by the wages collected from themselves, become village and district elders,[1] tax-collectors, policemen, excise and customs officials; that is, help the Government to do those things of which they complain. The workmen also complain that the factory owners reduce their pay and compel them to work more and more hours; but this also is done only because the workmen themselves lower the wages by competition, and also hire themselves to the factory owners as ware-

[1] Official functions performed by Russian peasants elected for the purpose by the peasants themselves. — Tr.

housemen, overseers, watchmen, and foremen; and search, fine, and in every way oppress their comrades in the interests of their masters.

Lastly, the workmen complain that troops are sent against them if they wish to appropriate the land which they regard as their own, or if they refrain from paying taxes, or organize strikes; but the troops are composed of soldiers, and soldiers are those same workmen, who for personal advantage or from fear of punishment have entered the military service, and, contrary both to their conscience and to the law of God they acknowledge, have taken an oath that they will kill all whom the authorities order them to kill.

So that all the calamities of the workmen are produced by themselves.

They need only cease to help the rich and the Governments, and all their sufferings would cease of themselves.

Why then do they continue doing that which ruins them?

III

Two thousand years ago a law of God became known to men, the law of reciprocity, that *one should act unto others as one wishes others to act to oneself*, or, as it is expressed by the Chinese teacher Confucius, "Do not do unto others that which you do not wish others to do unto you."

This law is simple, comprehensible to every one, and obviously gives the greatest welfare possible to man. And therefore it would seem that as soon as men had learned this law they ought immediately, as far as possible, to fulfil it themselves, and to use all their powers to teach this law and its fulfilment to the rising generations.

It would seem that long ago all men ought to have acted thus, as this law was expressed almost simultaneously by Confucius and Buddha and the Jewish teacher Hillel and by Jesus.

Especially it would seem that the men of our Christian world ought to act thus, recognizing as they do, as the chief divine revelation, that Gospel in which it is explicitly taught that in this law "is all the law and the prophets," that is, all the teaching necessary to man.

And yet almost two thousand years have elapsed and men not only refrain from fulfilling this law and from teaching it to their children, but in most cases they do not themselves even know it, or if they do they regard it either as unnecessary or as unpractical.

At first this seems strange, but when one thinks of how people lived before the discovery of this law, and how long they lived so, and of how the law disagrees with the life of humanity as it has developed, then one begins to understand why it happened that the law was not fulfilled.

It happened because while men did not know the law that for the welfare of all each should do unto others that which he would have others do unto him (the law of reciprocity), every man endeavored, for his own profit, to appropriate as much power as possible over other men.

And having appropriated such power, he had in his turn, in order to profit by it unhindered, to subordinate himself to those who were stronger than he, and to help them. These stronger ones in their turn had to submit to those who were stronger than they, and to help them.

So that in societies which did not know the law of reciprocity, of acting with others as one wishes others to act with oneself, always a small number of men dominated all the rest.

And therefore it is comprehensible that when this law was revealed to men, the small number of those who dominated the rest not only were averse to accepting it for themselves, but also could not desire that those dominated by them should learn and accept it.

The small number of dominating people knew and know very well that their power was and is founded only on the fact that those they dominate are continually fighting among themselves, endeavoring to subju-

gate each other. And therefore they have used and are always using all the means in their power to conceal this law from their subordinates.

They conceal the law, not by denying it, which is impossible, as it is so clear and simple, but by putting forward hundreds, thousands of other laws which they assert are more important and obligatory than this law of reciprocity.

Some of these men, priests, teach hundreds of ecclesiastical dogmas, rites, offerings, liturgies, which have nothing in common with the law of reciprocity, and announce *them* as the most important laws of God, the neglect of which involves eternal ruin.

Others, the rulers, having appropriated the teaching invented by the priests, institute, on the strength of this, State regulations, which are directly contrary to the law of reciprocity, and under threat of punishment demand from all their fulfilment.

Others again, learned and rich men, acknowledging neither God nor any obligatory divine law, teach that there is only science and its laws, which they, the learned, discover, and the rich know, and that in order that it should be well for all, it is necessary that people should cultivate through the medium of schools, lectures, theatres, concerts, picture galleries, meetings, the same idle life led by the learned and the rich, and then, they affirm, all the evil from which the workmen suffer will destroy itself.

None of these classes repudiate the law itself, but they put forward side by side with it such a number of all kinds of theological, State, and scientific laws, that amidst them all that simple, clear, and universally accessible law of God, the fulfilment of which undoubtedly delivers the majority of men from their sufferings, not only becomes imperceptible, but completely disappears.

It is from this cause the wonderful fact has arisen and still arises, that working-men, crushed by the Government and the wealthy, continue, generation after generation, to ruin their own lives and the lives of their brothers; to resort for the alleviation of their position to

the most complicated, or cunning, or difficult means, such as prayers, offerings, meek fulfilment of State demands, meetings, associations, trade unions, strikes, revolutions; but do not resort to *the only means:* the fulfilment of the law of God, which most certainly would liberate them from their calamities.

IV

"But is it possible that in so simple and short an utterance, that people should act with others as they desire others to act with them, the whole law of God and the entire guidance of man's life can consist?" those will say who are accustomed to the complication and intricacy of theological, State, and scientific arguments.

Such people imagine that the law of God and the guidance of man's life *must* be expressed in diffuse, complicated theories, and therefore cannot be expressed in so short and simple a statement.

It is true that this law of reciprocity is very short and simple, but it is precisely this shortness and simplicity which demonstrates that it is a true, indubitable, eternal, and righteous law; a law of God elaborated by thousands of years of the life of all humanity, and not the production of one man or of one group of men calling themselves the Church, the State, or Science. Theological discussions about the fall of a first man, his redemption, and the second advent; or State and scientific discussions about parliaments, supreme authority, the theory of punishment, property value, classification of science, natural selection, and so forth, — may be very witty and profound, but are always accessible only to a small number of men. Whereas the law of acting with others as one wishes they would act with oneself is accessible to all men, without distinction of race, religion, education, or even age.

Besides this, theological, State, or scientific arguments, which are accepted as true at one place and at one time, are regarded as untrue at another place and

another time; whereas this law of reciprocity, wherever known, is universally regarded as true, and cannot cease to be true for those who have once comprehended it.

But the chief distinction between this law and all others, and its principal advantage, is that all theological, State, scientific laws, not only fail to pacify men and to give them welfare, but often it is precisely these laws which produce the greatest enmity and suffering.

The law of doing unto others as you wish others to do to you, or of not doing to others as you do not wish to be treated, if only it were recognized by you, could not produce anything but concord and welfare. And therefore the consequences of this law are infinitely beneficial and diverse, determining all possible mutual relations of men, and everywhere substituting concord and service for discord and strife. Were men only to liberate themselves from the frauds which conceal this law from them, to recognize its imperativeness, and to cultivate its adaptation to life, a science, non-existent at present, would appear, common to all men, and the most important in the world: a science teaching how, on the basis of this law, all collisions could be avoided, both between separate individuals and between individuals and society. And if this as yet non-existent science were established and cultivated, and taught to all adults and children as pernicious superstitions and often useless or harmful sciences are now taught, then the whole life of man would change, and with it those oppressive conditions in which the enormous majority of mankind now live.

V

The Biblical tradition affirms that long before this law of reciprocity was revealed God gave man "His law."

In this law was included the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." This Commandment, for its time, was as important and fruitful as the later law of reciprocity,

but the same thing happened with the former as with the latter. It was not directly repudiated by men, but like the later law it became lost amid other rules and regulations, which were recognized as equally or even more important than the law of the inviolability of human life. If this injunction had existed alone, and if Moses (according to tradition) had brought down on his tablets as the sole Commandment of God merely these words, "Thou shalt not kill," men would have had to recognize the unalterable imperativeness of this law, admitting of no substitute. And if men were to recognize this command as the sole law of God, and to observe it strictly, even if only as strictly as some observe the keeping of the Sabbath, worshiping *ikons*, the sacrament, abstinence from pork, and so forth, then the whole life of mankind would change; neither wars nor slavery would any longer be possible, nor the expropriation of the land by the wealthy from the poor, nor the possession by the few of the product of the labor of the many, because all this is founded only on the possibility or the threat of *killing*.

So it would be if the command, "Thou shalt not kill," were recognized as the only law of God. But when the commandments about the Sabbath day, about not taking God's name, and others, were accepted as equally important and on a par with this law, then naturally yet more new priestly ordinances arose, also recognized as equally binding, — and God's greatest Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," which altered man's whole life, was drowned among them, and not only ceased to be always obligatory, — cases were even found when one could act in complete contradiction to it; so that to the present day this law has not received its proper significance.

The same thing happened also with the law of reciprocity.

So that the chief evil from which men suffer ceased long ago to consist in their ignorance of the true law of God, but in people to whom the knowledge and observance of the true law is disadvantageous, but who are

unable to destroy or refute it, inventing "precept upon precept" and "line upon line," as Isaiah says, and giving them out as equally binding or even more obligatory than the *true* laws of God. And therefore all that is now necessary for the deliverance of men from their sufferings is that they should emancipate themselves from all theological, State, and scientific superstitions, propounded as obligatory laws of life, and having thus liberated themselves, should naturally recognize as more binding for themselves than all other regulations and laws, that true, eternal law of God already known, which gives not to some only, but to all men everywhere, the greatest possible welfare in social life.

VI

"But," some will say, "however just this law of 'not doing to others' may be, it cannot be adapted by itself to every circumstance of life. If men were to recognize this law as always obligatory, without exception, they would have to acknowledge the use of any kind of violence between men as unlawful, for no man desires to undergo violence himself. And without the exercise of violence on some people the safety of the individual cannot be assured, property cannot be protected, one's country cannot be defended, the existing order cannot be maintained."

God says to men, "In order that it should be well for all of you, everywhere and always, observe my law of not doing to others what you do not wish them to do to you."

But men, who have organized a certain system, in the year 1901, in England, Germany, France, Russia, say, "Perhaps things may become worse if we fulfil this law of God given us for our welfare."

We accept a law invented by a group of men, however strange it may be and however bad may be the men who invented it, and we are not afraid of fulfilling it. But a law in accordance not only with reason and

conscience, but explicitly expressed in a book which we regard as the revelation of God, we are afraid of fulfilling this, for fear evil may come of it or disorder ensue.

Is it not evident that people who speak and think thus, speak not of order but of disorder, the disorder in which they live and find profitable?

Order, according to their idea, is a position which enables them to devour the lives of other men, — while disorder occurs when those devoured desire that their destroyers shall cease to devour them.

Such arguments only demonstrate that the dominating minority feel, in most cases unconsciously, that the recognition of the law of reciprocity would not only destroy their advantageous social position, but would reveal all their immorality and cruelty.

These men cannot argue otherwise.

But for the workmen turned off the land, crushed by taxes, forced into the penal labor of factories, transformed into slaves, into soldiers who torture themselves and their brothers, — for them it is time they understood that only faith in the law of God and its observance will deliver them from their sufferings.

The non-observance of this law, and consequently their continually increasing calamities, propel them toward this. It is time the laborers should feel that their salvation is in this alone; that they need only begin to observe this law of reciprocity for their position to improve immediately — to improve just in the degree to which the number of men increase who act with others as they desire others to act with them.

And these are not mere words, not an abstraction like the Church, State, Socialistic, Scientific theories, but an effective means of deliverance.

Theological, State, and Scientific theories and promises offer welfare to the workmen, some in the next world, some in this, but always in a distant future, when the bones of those who live and suffer now are rotten; whereas the law of reciprocity improves the position of the workers at the present moment and without doubt.

Even if all workers did not clearly see that by working on the lands and in the factories of capitalists they afford them the possibility of profiting by the product of the labor of their own brothers, and that therefore by thus working they break the law of reciprocity, or, if, seeing this, they, owing to their wants, had not the power of refusing such work, — still the abstinence from such work even of only a few would, by rendering the position of the capitalists more difficult, immediately ameliorate the position of the rest. And the abstinence from direct participation in the activities of capital and government in the capacities of overseers, clerks, tax-collectors, customs officials, etc. (obviously contrary to the law of reciprocity), would still more ameliorate the position of the workmen, even if all were not capable of refraining from such activities. And further still, the refusal of the workmen to participate in the army (which has murder for its object, the act most contrary to the law of reciprocity), — which nowadays is more and more often directed against the workmen themselves, — would altogether alter for the better the position of the workers.

VII

The law of God *is* the law of God not because, as the priests always affirm about their laws, it has been communicated in a miraculous way by God Himself, but because it unmistakably and obviously directs men to that way advancing along which they unquestionably are delivered from their sufferings, and unquestionably obtain the greatest inner (spiritual) and external (physical) welfare, — not some few particularly chosen men, but all men without exception.

Such is the law of God about acting towards others as one wishes that others should act toward oneself. It shows that men fulfilling it unquestionably obtain inner spiritual welfare, in the consciousness of their harmony with the will of God, and of the increase of love in themselves and in others; and that at the same time

they obtain in social life the greatest possible welfare accessible to them. Whereas divergence from this law entails aggravation of their position.

And, as a matter of fact, to any one who does not participate in the mutual struggle between men, but observes life from without, it is evident that the struggling parties act exactly in the same way as gamblers, who surrender a certain though meagre property for the very doubtful possibility of increasing it.

Whether a workman who has lowered the price of his comrades' labor, or has accepted the service of the wealthy, or has entered the army, will better his position, is as doubtful as the success of the gambler. There may be a thousand events owing to which his position will remain the same or become even worse than before. This fact, however, is certain, that his consent to work cheaper or to serve the capitalists and the Government will aggravate, to some extent at all events, the position of all the workers, and his own together with theirs, — as certain as the fact that the gambler loses control over the sum he stakes.

To him who does not participate in the struggle but observes life, it is evident that, as in games of hazard, lotteries, Stock Exchange operations, only the owners of the gambling houses, the lotteries, the stockbrokers' offices, make their fortunes, whereas all those who gamble are ruined. So also in life: it is only the Governments, the wealthy, in general the oppressors, who stand to win; whereas those workers who in the hope of improving their position diverge from the law of reciprocity only aggravate the position of all workers, and therefore also their own.

The law of God *is* the law of God for this reason, that it defines the position of man in the world, showing him the "best" which he can do for his spiritual as well as for his physical life while in this position.

"Be not anxious," it is said in the Gospel, in explanation of this law; "Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that

ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

And these are not mere words, but the explanation of the true position of man in the world.

If man only fulfils what God requires of him, if he observes His law, then God also will do for him that which he requires. So that the law of doing to others as one would wish to be done to oneself relates to God also.

In order that He should do for us what we desire, we must do for Him what He desires of us. And He desires of us that we should act with others as we would wish others to act with us. The only difference is that what He desires of us is needful, not for Him, but for ourselves, yielding the highest welfare accessible to us.

VII

The workmen must cleanse themselves in order that the Governments and wealthy shall cease to devour their lives. Impurity breeds only in dirt, and it feeds on strange bodies only while they are unclean. And therefore for the deliverance of the workers from their calamities there is only one means — that of purifying themselves. And to purify themselves it is necessary that they should be liberated from theological, State, and scientific superstitions, and have faith in God and His law.

In this lies the only means of deliverance.

One meets, at the present time, either an educated or an ordinary, almost illiterate, workman. Both are filled with indignation against the existing order of things. The educated workman believes neither in God nor His law, but he knows Marx, Lassalle, and follows the activities of Bebel, Jaures, in Parliaments, and he delivers stirring orations about the injustice of the seizure of the land and the implements of labor, of transference of property by inheritance, etc.; the uneducated

workman, although he does not know these theories, and believes in the Trinity, the Redemption, etc., is equally indignant with the landlords and capitalists, and regards the whole existing organization as wrong. And yet, give this workman, either the educated or uneducated one, the possibility of bettering his position by producing certain articles cheaper than others, although it may ruin scores, hundreds, thousands, of his comrades, or the possibility of entering the service of the capitalists in a position which gives him a greater salary, or of buying land, or organizing a business himself with hired labor, — and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand will do it without scruple, and defend their possession of the land or their privileges as employers often even more strenuously than born landlords and capitalists.

As to their participation in murder (that is, in military service, or in taxes destined to the support of troops), an act not only morally wrong but most pernicious to their comrades and themselves, the very act which forms the basis of their slavery — about this none of them trouble, and all consent either to pay the taxes for the army or to become soldiers themselves, regarding such actions as quite normal.

Is it possible that out of such men any society can be formed other than the one which now exists?

The workmen lay the blame of their position on the avarice and cruelty of the landowners, capitalists, coercionists; but all or almost all the workmen, without faith in God and His law, are similarly, only on a smaller and unsuccessful scale, landowners, capitalists, and coercionists.

A country lad in need of a livelihood comes up to town to a friend who has a place as a coachman in the house of a wealthy merchant, and begs him to find him a berth at wages lower than those current. The country lad is ready to accept such a situation, but, coming next morning, he casually overhears in the servants' room the complaint of an old man who has lost his situation and is at a loss to know how to live. The lad is

sorry for the old man and he relinquishes his berth, not wishing to act to another man as he does not wish to be done to. Or else a peasant with a large family accepts the well-paid position of steward to a rich and exacting landowner. The new steward, feeling his family now provided for, is glad of the situation; but on entering his duties he has immediately to enforce fines on the peasants for horses which have strayed in the gentleman's fields; he has to catch women collecting dead branches for their fires in the landowner's woods; he has to reduce the wages of the workmen and to compel them to labor to the utmost verge of their strength. And the steward feels that his conscience does not allow him to do these things. He refuses, and notwithstanding the complaints and reproaches of his family, he gives up his situation and occupies himself with something else which yields him much less. Or else again a soldier has been brought with his company against workmen in revolt and told to fire at them. He refuses to obey, and for this endures cruel suffering. All these men act thus because the evil they are doing to others is evident to them, and their heart clearly tells them that this which they are doing is contrary to the law of God, that one should not do to others as one does not wish others to act to oneself. But if a workman beating down the price of certain work does not see those whom he thereby injures, the evil he thus causes to his comrades does not therefore diminish. And if a workman passes over to the side of the employers and neither sees nor feels the injury he is causing his comrades, the injury still remains. It is the same with a man who enters the military service and prepares to kill his brothers if necessary. If he does not yet see, when entering the service, whom and where he will kill when he learns to shoot and to stab, he can at any rate understand that shooting and stabbing will be his work.

And therefore, in order that the workmen should free themselves from their oppression and bondage, they must educate in themselves the religious feeling which prohibits all that aggravates the general condition of

their brothers, even when this aggravation is not apparent. They must religiously refrain (as people now refrain from eating pork, eating meat during fasts, from work on Sundays, and so forth), firstly, from working for capitalists if they can possibly live without; secondly, from offering their work at a lower rate than that current; thirdly, from improving their position by passing over to the side of the capitalists and serving their interests; and fourthly and chiefly, from participating in Government coercion, be it police, custom-house, or military service.

Only by such a religious attitude toward the form of their activity can the workmen liberate themselves from their oppression.

If the workman for gain or from fear is ready to enter the ranks of organized murderers, — soldiers, — without his conscience rebuking him, if for the increase of his welfare he is ready deliberately to deprive his more needy comrade of his earnings, or for the sake of salary to pass over to the side of the oppressors, helping them in their activity, he has nothing to complain of.

Whatever his position he makes it himself, and he himself cannot be other than one of the oppressed or one of the oppressors.

And this cannot be otherwise. Without belief in God and His law man cannot but desire to procure for himself in his short life the greatest amount of welfare, whatever consequences this may entail for others. And as soon as people desire, each one for himself, the greatest possible welfare, independently of the consequences to others, then inevitably, whatever the organization introduced, such men will form a heap with a pointed top, a pyramid, — at the apex the rulers, and underneath them the oppressed.

IX

It is said in the Gospels that Jesus pitied men for their exhaustion and dispersion "like sheep without a shepherd."

What would he have felt and said to-day, seeing men not only exhausted and dispersed like sheep without a shepherd, but millions of men all over the world, generation after generation, ruining themselves in brutish labor, stultified, unenlightened, in the power of vice, killing, torturing each other, — notwithstanding that the means of deliverance from all these calamities was given them two thousand years ago?

The key to the lock of the chain forged around the working people has been placed by their side, and they need only take this key and unlock the chain to become free. But the working-men as yet do not do this, but either undertake nothing and yield themselves to despair; or else struggle and break their bones in the hope of forcibly sundering the unbreakable chain; or else, which is even worse, acting like a captive animal when it rushes at the one who tries to free it, they attack those who indicate the key which would open the lock on their chain.

This key is faith in God and His law.

Only when men throw off those superstitions in which they are deliberately trained, when they believe that the law of doing to others what one desires others to do to oneself is the most important divine law of our time, and believe this as firmly as some now believe in keeping the Sabbath, others in fasting, liturgies, sacraments, and others in the repetition of prayers, or the observance of oaths, and so forth; and when, having thus believed, they fulfil this law in preference to all other laws and ordinances, — only then will the slavery and distressed condition of the workmen be abolished.

And therefore it is necessary that the workmen themselves should first of all, without sparing old habits and traditions, and without fearing external persecution from Church and State, or internal strife with one's relatives, — boldly and deliberately free themselves from the false faiths in which they have been educated, shall more and more make clear to themselves and others, and especially to the young generations and to children, the essence of faith in God and of the consequent law of

reciprocity, and shall follow this law to their utmost strength although it involve temporary disadvantages. Thus the workmen themselves should act.

As to the ruling minority, who, profiting by the labor of the workmen, have acquired all the advantages of education, and therefore can clearly discern the deceits in which the laborers are kept — as to these, if they do indeed desire to serve the working people, they should first of all, both by example and by word, endeavor to free them from those religious and State deceits in which they are entangled, and not act as they now do: that is, while sparing, supporting, and even strengthening by their example these deceits, especially the chief religious ones, offer ineffective and even pernicious remedies, which not only fail to liberate the workmen from their calamities, but even more and more aggravate their position.

When, where, and how this will be accomplished no one can say. One thing only is certain — that this means alone can free the enormous majority of mankind — all the laborers — from their humiliations and sufferings.

There are no other means, nor can there be.

MY REPLY TO THE SYNOD'S EDICT EXCOMMUNICATING ME ON FEBRUARY 20–22, AND TO LETTERS CONCERNING IT

(*April* 4, 1901)

"He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself better than all." — COLERIDGE.

I DID not at first intend answering the Edict of the Synod concerning me, but it has called forth many letters from unknown correspondents, of whom some abuse me for denying what I do not deny, others exhort me to believe in what I have never ceased to believe, and others, again, express a fellowship with me that can hardly really exist, and a sympathy to which I hardly have a right. So I have decided to answer both the Edict itself, showing what is unjust in it, and the letters from these unknown correspondents.

The Edict in general has many faults. It is either illegal, or else intentionally ambiguous; it is arbitrary, groundless, and untruthful, and, besides, contains libels, and incitements to evil feelings and actions.

It is either illegal or intentionally ambiguous because, if intended to be an excommunication from the Church, it does not fulfil those Church regulations according to which such excommunications can alone be pronounced; if, on the other hand, it is a declaration that he who does not believe in the Church and its dogmas does not belong to it, the statement goes without saying, and such a declaration can have no other object than that it should appear as an excommunication, without in reality being such; and this, as a matter of fact, is what has happened, the Edict having been understood in this light.

It is arbitrary, because it accuses me alone of unbelief in all the enumerated points, whereas not only many, but almost all educated people share this unbelief, and constantly have expressed, and do express it in conversation, in letters, in pamphlets, and in books.

It is groundless, because the chief reason which is put forward for its announcement is the great circulation of my seductive false teachings, whereas I am well aware that there are in Russia hardly a hundred individuals who share my views, and that the circulation of my writings about religion is so insignificant, owing to the censorship, that the majority of those who have read the Synod's Edict have not the slightest idea of what I have written about religion, as is evident from the letters I have received.

It contains glaring untruth in its statement that the Church has made unsuccessful efforts to convince me of my errors. Nothing of the kind has ever been done.

It constitutes what in legal terminology is called a libel, as it contains intentionally unjust assertions tending to cause me injury.

Lastly, it is an incitement to evil feelings and actions, for it has called forth, as one might expect, spite and hatred toward me from unenlightened and unreasoning people, reaching even to threats of assassination in the letters I have received. "Now thou art given up to an anathema, and wilt after death go to eternal suffering, and wilt die like a dog . . . anathema, thou old devil . . . be cursed," writes one. Another rebukes the Government for not having yet incarcerated me in a monastery, and fills his letter with invective. A third writes: "If the Government will not remove thee, we will ourselves render thee silent." This letter concludes with maledictions: "I will find means to destroy thee, thou villain. . . ." Then follow indecent abuses. I remarked symptoms of a similar spitefulness when meeting some people after the Synod's Edict. On the very day when the Edict was published, while walking in the streets I heard the words, "Here is the devil in man's image," and if the crowd had been differently com-

posed it is very possible that I should have been beaten as a man was beaten a few years ago in front of the Panteleymon Chapel.

So the Synod's Edict in general is very wicked; and the fact that it concludes with the statement that those who have signed it pray God that I should become like them does not make it better.

In detail the Edict is incorrect in the following: It says that "the well-known writer, Russian by birth, Orthodox by baptism and education, Count Tolstoï, seduced by the pride of his intellect, has audaciously revolted against the Lord and His Christ and against His holy household, and has openly and publicly renounced the Orthodox Mother Church which has reared and educated him."

That I have renounced the Church which calls itself Orthodox is quite correct.

But I have renounced it not because I have revolted against the Lord; but, on the contrary, only because I desired to serve Him with all the powers of my soul. Before renouncing the Church and that unity with the people which was unspeakably dear to me, I had devoted several years to the study of the Church doctrine, both theoretical and practical, the truth of which for certain reasons I had begun to doubt. For the theory, I read all that I could upon the doctrine of the Church, and studied and critically analyzed its dogmatic theology; practically, I strictly followed, during more than a year, all the prescriptions of the Church, keeping all its fasts and attending all its services. Then I became convinced that the teaching of the Church is theoretically a crafty and pernicious deceit, whilst practically it is a collection of the grossest superstitions and sorcery completely concealing the whole meaning of the Christian teaching. (It is sufficient to read the Prayer Book, and to observe those ceremonies which are incessantly being carried on by Orthodox priesthood and regarded as Christian worship, to see that all these rites are nothing but various methods of sorcery adapted to all possible occasions in life. In order that a child which has died should

go to Paradise, it must be rubbed with oil and bathed to the utterance of certain words; before a woman after childbirth can cease to be unclean, certain conjurations must be recited; to insure success in business or peaceful life in a new house, a good harvest, the termination of a drought, the recovery from an illness, to better the condition of a deceased one in the next world — for all this and a thousand other things there exist certain incantations which must be pronounced by a priest at a certain place, and for a certain consideration.)

And I did indeed renounce the Church and cease to fulfil its ceremonies, and expressed in my will that those near to me when I am dying shall not allow any servants of the Church to approach me, and that my dead body shall be removed as soon as possible without undergoing any sorcery or ritual, as any obnoxious and unnecessary thing would be removed to be out of the way of those who are alive.

As to the statement that I "have devoted my literary activity and the talent given me by God to the propagation amongst the people of teachings contrary to Christ and the Church, etc., in writings and letters disseminated in large quantities all over the world by me as well as by my disciples, and that, especially in the precincts of our dear fatherland, I have preached with the enthusiasm of a fanatic the overthrow of all the dogmas of the Church and of the very essence of the Christian teaching" — this is incorrect. I have never troubled myself about the propagation of my teaching. It is true I have for my own self expressed in my writings my understanding of Christ's teaching, and have not concealed these works from those who wished to become acquainted with them; but I have never published them myself, and I have communicated to others what I understand by Christ's teaching only when I have been asked to do so. In such cases I have stated what I think, and have given my books if I had them.

It is further said that I "repudiate God worshiped

in the Holy Trinity as Creator and Guardian of the universe, that I renounce the Lord Jesus Christ, God-man Redeemer and Saviour of the world, Who has suffered for the sake of us men and our salvation, and risen from the dead, that I repudiate the immaculate conception of Christ the Lord and virginity of Mary before and after His birth." That I repudiate the incomprehensible Trinity and the fable about the fall of the first man, which has no meaning at the present time, the sacrilegious story about a God born of a Virgin and redeeming the human race — this is quite true. But God — a Spirit, God — Love, the only God, Source of all — I not only do not repudiate, I recognize nothing else as really existing except God; and the whole meaning of life I see only in the fulfilment of the Will of God as expressed in the Christian teaching.

It is again said: "He does not recognize future life and retribution." If one understands future life in the sense of the Second Advent, of hell with its eternal torments and devils, and of Paradise with its eternal bliss, then it is perfectly correct that I do not recognize such a future life. But eternal life and retribution here and everywhere, now and always, I recognize to such an extent that, standing as I am at my age on the border of the grave, I often have to exert an effort not to desire bodily death, *i.e.*, birth to a new life. And I believe that every righteous act increases the true welfare of my eternal life, and that every evil act diminishes that welfare.

It is also said that I repudiate the Sacraments. This is quite true. I regard all Sacraments as a base and gross sorcery which does not correspond to the idea of God and of the Christian teaching, and, moreover, as an infringement of the most direct injunctions of the Gospel. In the baptism of infants I see a palpable distortion of the meaning which might have been attached to the baptism of adults when they consciously accepted Christianity; in the fulfilment of the marriage ritual in relation to people

who had previously contracted other sexual unions, and in the admission of divorce and the consecration of marriages after divorce, I see the direct infringement of the spirit and the letter of the Gospel teaching. In the periodical remission of sins at confession, I see a pernicious deceit, which only encourages immorality and destroys the fear of committing sin. In anointing with oil, in the worship of *ikons* and relics, and in all those ceremonies, prayers, and incantations with which the Prayer Book is filled, I see the methods of gross enchantment.

In the communion, I see the deification of the flesh and the distortion of the Christian teaching. In ordination, besides an evident preparation for deceit, I see a direct contradiction of Christ's words, which positively forbid calling any one "teacher, father, or master" (Matt. xxiii. 8–10).

Finally, it is said, as the last and highest degree of my culpability, that I reviled the most "sacred objects of belief, and did not shudder at submitting to mockery the most sacred of all Sacraments, the Eucharist." That I did not shudder at describing simply and objectively that which the priest does when preparing this so-called sacrament is quite correct. But that this so-called sacrament is something sacred, and that to describe it simply as it takes place is blasphemy, this is quite incorrect. Blasphemy consists not in calling a screen a screen instead of iconostasis, and a cup a cup instead of chalice, etc. But the most terribly incessant, revolting blasphemy consists in people profiting by all possible means of deceit and hypnotization to induce children and simple-minded people to believe that if one cuts up little bits of bread in a certain way, pronouncing certain words, and puts them into wine, that God enters into these pieces; that he in whose name a piece will be taken out will recover, or if he be dead, his position in the next world will be bettered; and that into him who will eat such a piece God Himself will enter.

Why, it is this which is terrible.

However one may understand the personality of

Christ, that teaching of his which destroys the evil of the world, is so simple, so easy, which so undoubtedly gives welfare to men if only it be not distorted by them, this teaching is completely concealed, completely altered into the gross magic of bathing, rubbing with oil, bodily gestures, enchantments, the swallowing of bits of bread, and so forth; so that of the teaching nothing has been left, and if one ever attempts to remind people that the teachings of Christ consist not in these sorceries, Te Deums, Masses, candles, *ikons*, but in men loving one another, not returning evil for evil, not judging, not killing each other — then the wrath of those to whom this deceit is advantageous is excited, and these men publicly, with inconceivable arrogance, declare in churches, publish in books, newspapers, catechisms, that Christ never forbade oaths, never forbade murder (executions, wars), that the teaching of non-resistance to evil has been with Satanic slyness invented by the enemies of Christ.[1]

It is terrible, above all, that people to whom this is advantageous deceive not only those who are grown up, but, having the power to do so, children also, those very children about whom Christ said, "Woe to him that shall deceive them." It is terrible that these men, for the sake of their petty advantages, commmit this frightful evil and conceal from men the truth which was revealed by Christ, and gives welfare — such welfare as cannot be compensated even in a thousandth degree by the advantage they receive from this. They are like the robber who murders a whole family of five or six persons to carry away with him an old coat and a shilling's worth of coppers. All the clothes and money would be willingly surrendered if only he did not murder them: but he cannot act otherwise. So also with the religious deceivers. One could maintain them ten times better in the greatest possible luxury if only they would cease to cause men to perish by their deceit. But they cannot act otherwise. This it is which is ter-

[1] Speech by Ambrosius, Bishop of Harkov.

rible, and therefore it is not only permissible but obligatory on one to reveal their deceit. If there be anything sacred, it certainly is not that which they call sacraments, but precisely this duty of exposing their religious deceit when one sees it.

If a savage rub his idol with cream, or beat it, I may pass by indifferently without offending his belief, because he does this in the name of his superstition, which is strange to me, and does not concern what I consider sacred; but when men by their wild superstition, however many of them there may be, however old may be the superstition, and however powerful they may be — in the name of that God by whom I live, and that teaching of Christ which has given me life and can give it to all men — when they preach gross sorcery, I cannot remain an indifferent witness. And if I call what they are doing by its name, I only fulfil that which I should, which I cannot refrain from if I believe in God and the Christian teaching. And if they call this disclosure of their deceit blasphemy, it only proves the power of the deceit, and should only increase the efforts of those who believe in God and in the teaching of Christ, to destroy the deceit which conceals from men the true God.

Concerning Christ, who drove the oxen, sheep, and merchants out of the Temple, it was inevitable that men should say he was a blasphemer. If he were to come now and to see what is being done in his name in the Church, he would certainly, with yet greater and lawful anger, throw away all these dreadful robes and apparels and crosses and chalices and candles and *ikons*, and all those things by the means of which they accomplish their magic and conceal God and His teaching from man.

So this is what is correct and incorrect in the Edict of the Synod concerning me. I do not indeed believe in what they say they believe in. But I do believe in much of what they wish to persuade people I do not believe in.

I believe in this: I believe in God, whom I compre-

hend as Spirit, as Love, as the Source of all. I believe that He is in me and I in Him. I believe that the Will of God is the most clearly and comprehensively expressed in the teaching of the man Christ, — to regard whom as God, and to pray to whom, I deem the greatest sacrilege. I believe that the true welfare of man lies in the fulfilment of the Will of God; and that His will consists in men loving each other, and therefore behaving toward others as they desire that others should behave with them; as it is said in the Gospels, "in this is contained all the law and the prophets." I believe that the meaning of the life of every man, therefore, lies only in the increase of love in himself; that this increase of love leads the individual man in this life toward greater and greater welfare; that after death it gives the greater welfare the more love there be in the man; and that, at the same time, more than anything else, it contributes to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, *i.e.*, to an order of life where the discord, deceit, and violence which now reign will be replaced by free agreement, truth, and brotherly love between men. I believe that for the development of Love there is but one means — prayer, not public prayer in churches, which was expressly forbidden by Christ (Matt. vi. 5–13); but that prayer an example of which is given by Christ, solitary prayer consisting in the reëstablishment and strengthening in one's consciousness of the meaning of one's life and of one's dependence solely upon the Will of God.

Whether these, my beliefs, do or do not offend, grieve, or perplex any one, whether they hinder anything or displease any one — I am as little able to alter them as I am to alter my body. I have to live alone, and I have to die alone (and that very soon), and therefore I cannot possibly believe otherwise than as I do, preparing to go to that God from whom I have come. I do not say that my belief is the only undoubtedly true one for all times, but I do not see any other more simple, clear, and answering all the demands of my mind and heart. Were I to learn a better, I would immediately

accept it, because God requires nothing but the truth. But to return to that from which I have just escaped with such sufferings, I decidedly cannot, as a flying bird cannot return into the eggshell from which it has come.

Coleridge has said: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself" (his own peace) "better than all."

I have advanced in the opposite way. I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than my peace; then I loved Christianity more than my Church; and now I love the Truth more than anything in the world. And until now the Truth coincides for me with Christianity as I understand it; and I profess this Christianity, and in that measure in which I do profess it I peacefully and joyously live and peacefully and joyously am approaching death.

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"

On the Death of King Humbert

(*September*, 1900)

"Thou shalt do no murder." — Ex. xx. 13.

"The disciple is not above his master: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his master." — Luke vi. 40.

"For all they that take up the sword shall perish with the sword." — Matt. xxvi. 52.

"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." — Matt. vii. 12.

WHEN kings are tried and executed like Charles I., Louis XVI., and Maximilian of Mexico; or killed in a palace conspiracy like Peter III., Paul, and all kinds of Sultans, Shahs, and Khans, the event is generally passed over in silence. But when one of them is killed without a trial, and not by a palace conspiracy; like Henry IV., Alexander II., Carnot, the Empress of Austria, the Shah of Persia, and, recently, King Humbert, then such murder causes great surprise and indignation among Kings and Emperors, and those attached to them, as if they were the great enemies of murder, as if they never profited by murder, never took part in it, and never gave orders to commit it. And yet the kindest of these murdered Kings, such as Alexander II. or Humbert, were guilty of the murder of tens of thousands of persons killed on the battle-field, not to mention those executed at home; while hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of people have been killed, hanged, beaten to death, or shot, by the more cruel Kings and Emperors.

Christ's teaching cancels the law "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"; but those men who have kept to the older law and still keep to it, who act upon it by

punishing and carrying on wars, and who not only act on the law "an eye for an eye," but give orders to kill thousands without any provocation, by declaring war, — *they* have no right to be indignant when the same law is applied to themselves in so infinitesimal a measure that hardly one King or Emperor gets killed to a hundred thousand, or perhaps to a million ordinary people killed by the order, or with the consent, of Kings and Emperors.

Kings and Emperors should not be indignant when such murders as that of Alexander II. or Humbert occur, but should, on the contrary, be surprised that such murders are so rare, considering the continual and universal example of committing murders they themselves set the people.

Kings and Emperors are surprised and horrified when one of themselves is murdered, and yet the whole of their activity consists in managing murder and preparing for murder. The keeping up, the teaching and exercising, of armies with which Kings and Emperors are always so much occupied, and of which they are the organizers, — what is it but preparation for murder?

The masses are so hypnotized that, though they see what is continually going on around them, they do not understand what it means. They see the unceasing care Kings, Emperors, and Presidents bestow on disciplined armies, see the parades, reviews, and manœuvers they hold, and of which they boast to one another, and the people eagerly crowd to see how their own brothers, dressed up in bright-colored, glittering clothes, are turned into machines to the sound of drums and trumpets, and, obedient to the shouting of one man, all make the same movements; and they do not understand the meaning of it all.

Yet the meaning of such drilling is very clear and simple. It is preparing for murder. It means the stupefying of men in order to convert them into instruments for murdering.

And it is just Kings and Emperors and Presidents who do it, and organize it, and pride themselves on it.

And it is these same people whose special employment is murder-organizing, who have made murder their profession, who dress in military uniforms, and carry weapons (swords at their side), who are horror-struck and indignant when one of themselves is killed.

It is not because such murders as the recent murder of Humbert are exceptionally cruel that they are so terrible. Things done by the order of Kings and Emperors, not only in the days of old, such as the massacre of St. Bartholomew, persecutions for faith, terrible ways of putting down peasant riots, but also the present executions, the torture of solitary cells and disciplinary battalions, hanging, decapitation, shooting, and slaughter at the wars, are incomparably more cruel than the murders committed by Anarchists.

Nor is it on account of their injustice that these murders are terrible. If Alexander and Humbert did not deserve death, the thousands of Russians who perished at Plevna, and of Italians who perished in Abyssinia, deserved it still less. No, it is not because of their cruelty and injustice these murders are terrible, but because of the want of reason in those who perpetrate them.

If the regicides commit murder under the influence of feelings of indignation evoked by witnessing the sufferings of the enslaved people, for which sufferings they hold Alexander II., Carnot, or Humbert responsible, or because they are influenced by personal desire for revenge, — however immoral such conduct may be, still it is comprehensible; but how can an organized body of Anarchists such as those by whom, it is said, Brésси was sent out, and by whom another Emperor was threatened, how can it, quietly considering means of improving the condition of the people, find nothing better to do than to murder people, the killing of whom is as useful as cutting off one of the Hydra's heads?

Kings and Emperors have long established a system resembling the mechanism of a magazine rifle, *i.e.*, as soon as one bullet flies out another takes its place. "*Le roi est mort — vive le roi!*" Then what is the use of killing them? It is only from a most

superficial point of view that the murder of such persons can seem a means of saving the people from oppression and wars, which destroy their lives.

We need only remember that the same kind of oppression and war went on no matter who stood at the head of the Government: Nicholas or Alexander, Louis or Napoleon, Frederic or William, Palmerston or Gladstone, McKinley or any one else, in order to see that it is not some definite person who causes the oppression and the wars from which people suffer.

The misery of the people is not caused by individuals, but by an order of Society by which they are bound together in a way that puts them in the power of a few, or, more often, of one man: a man so depraved by his unnatural position, — having the fate and lives of millions of people in his power, — that he is always in an unhealthy state and suffering more or less from a mania of self-aggrandizement, which is not noticed in him only because of his exceptional position.

Apart from the fact that such men are surrounded, from the cradle to the grave, by the most insane luxury and its usual accompaniment of flattery and servility, the whole of their education, and all their occupations, are centered on the one object of murder, the study of murder in the past, the best means of murdering in the present, the best ways of preparing for murder in the future. From their earliest years they learn the art of murder in all possible forms, always carry about with them instruments of murder, dress in different uniforms, attend parades, manœuvers, and reviews, visit each other, present orders and the command of regiments to each other. And yet not only does nobody tell them the real name of their actions, not only does nobody tell them that preparing for murder is revolting and criminal, but they hear nothing but praise and words of admiration from all around them for these actions.

The only part of the Press that reaches them, and which seems to them to be the expression of the feel-

ings of the best of the people or their best representatives, exalts all their words and deeds, however silly and wicked they may be, in the most servile manner. All who surround them, men and women, cleric or lay, all these people who do not value human dignity, vie with each other in flattering them in the most refined manner, agree with them in everything, and deceive them continually, making it impossible for them to know life as it is. These men might live to be a hundred and never see a real, free man, and never hear the truth.

We are sometimes appalled by the words and deeds of these men, but if we only consider their state we cannot but see that any man would act in the same way in such a position. A reasonable man can do but one thing in such a position, *i.e.*, leave it. Every one who remains in such a position will act in the same manner.

What, indeed, must be going on in the head of some William of Germany, a man of limited understanding, little education, and with a great deal of ambition, whose ideals are like those of a German "junker," when any silly or horrid thing he may say is always met with an enthusiastic "*Hoch!*" and commented on, as if it were something very important, by the Press of the whole world? He says that the soldiers should be prepared to kill their own fathers in obedience to his command. The answer is "Hurrah!" He says the Gospels must be introduced with a fist of iron. "Hurrah!" He says that the Army must not take any prisoners in China, but kill all, and he is not placed in a lunatic asylum, but they cry "Hurrah!" and set sail for China to execute his orders.

Or Nicholas, who, though naturally modest, begins his reign by declaring to venerable old men, in answer to the desire they express of being allowed to discuss their own affairs, that their hope for self-government is a senseless dream. And the organs of the Press that reach him, and the people whom he meets, praise him for it. He proposes a childish, silly, and untruthful

project of universal peace at the same time that he is ordering an increase of the Army, and even then there are no limits to the laudations of his wisdom and his virtue. Without any reason, he senselessly and pitilessly offends the whole of the Finnish nation, and again hears nothing but praise. At last he enters upon the Chinese slaughter, terrible by its injustice, cruelty, and its contrast with his project of peace; and he gets applauded simultaneously from all sides, both for his own conquests and for his adherence to his father's policy of peace. What must indeed be going on in the heads and hearts of such men?

So that it is not Alexanders and Humberts, Williams, Nicholases, and Chamberlains, who are the cause of oppression and war, even though they do organize them, but it is those who have placed them in, and support them in, a position in which they have power over the life and death of men.

Therefore it is not necessary to kill Alexanders and Nicholases, Williams and Humberts, but only to leave off supporting the social condition of which they are the product. It is the selfishness and stupefaction of the people who sell their freedom and their honor for insignificant material advantages, which supports the present state of society.

Those who stand on the lowest rung of the ladder, partly as a consequence of being stupefied by a patriotic and pseudo-religious education, partly for the sake of personal advantages, give up their freedom and their feeling of human dignity to those who stand higher, and who offer them material advantages. In a like position are those standing a little higher. They, too, through being stupefied, and especially for material advantages, give up their freedom and sense of human dignity. The same is true of those standing still higher; and so it continues up to the highest rungs, up to the person or persons who, standing on the very summit of the social cone, have no one to submit to, nor anywhere to rise to, and have no motive for action except ambition and love of power. These are generally

so depraved and stupefied by their insane power over life and death, and by the flattery and servility of those around them, which is connected with such power, that while doing evil they feel convinced they are the benefactors of the human race. It is the people themselves who, by sacrificing their human dignity for material profits, produce these men, and are afterwards angry with them for their stupid and cruel acts; murdering such people is like whipping children after spoiling them.

Very little seems needed to stop oppression and useless war, and to prevent any one from being indignant with those who seem to be the cause of such oppression and war.

Only that things should be called by their right names and seen as they are; that it should be understood that an army is an instrument of murder, that the recruiting and drilling of armies which Kings, Emperors, and Presidents carry on with so much self-assurance are preparations for murder.

If only every King, Emperor, and President would understand that his work of organizing armies is not an honorable and important duty, as his flatterers persuade him it is, but a most abominable business, *i.e.*, the preparing for, and the managing of, murder. If only every private individual understood that the payment of taxes which helps to equip soldiers, and above all, military service, are not immaterial but highly immoral actions, by which he not only permits murder, but takes part in it himself — then this power of the Kings and Emperors which arouses indignation, and causes them to be killed, would come to an end of itself.

And so the Alexanders, Carnots, Humberts, and others should not be killed, but it ought to be shown them that they are murderers; and above all, they should not be allowed to kill men; their orders to murder should not be obeyed.

If men do not yet act in this manner, it is only because Governments, to maintain themselves, diligently exercise a hypnotic influence upon the people. There-

fore we can help to prevent people killing Kings and each other, not by murder, — murders only strengthen this hypnotic state, — but by arousing men from the delusion in which they are held.

And it is this that I have tried to do in these remarks.

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

(*December*, 1898)

I

A BOY is born in the country. Laboring always with his father, his grandfather, his mother, he sees each year the finest crops from the fields he and his father have plowed, harrowed, and sowed — the fields that his mother and sister have mowed and reaped, binding the corn into the sheaves which he himself has helped to stack — he sees always that his father carries the best of these crops, not to his own house, but to the squire's barn beyond the manor gardens.

As they pass the manor-house with the creaking cart he and his father have piled up, the boy sees on the veranda a richly dressed lady seated at a table spread with a silver kettle, fine china, cakes, and sweets; on the other side of the carriage drive he sees the squire's two sons in shining shoes and embroidered shirts playing ball on the smooth lawn.

The ball is knocked over the cart. "Pick it up, boy," cries one of the young gentlemen.

"Pick it up, Johnny!" shouts the father to his son, taking off his cap and walking by the side of the cart holding the reins.

"What does it mean?" thinks the boy. "I am tired with work while they are playing; yet I must fetch the balls for them!"

But he fetches the ball, and the young gentleman takes it from the coarse sunburnt peasant-boy's hand with fine white fingers and returns to the game without noticing him.

The boy's father has gone on with the cart. The boy runs along the road to catch them up, kicking up the dust with his clumsy, worn-out boots, and together they reach the barn, which is crowded with carts and sheaves. The bustling overseer, his canvas jacket wet with sweat at the back, and a stick in his hand, greets the boy's father with an oath for driving up to the wrong place. The father apologizes, turns back wearily, lugging at the reins of the exhausted horse, and stops at the further side.

The boy approaches his father, and asks: "Father, why do we bring our corn to him? Haven't we grown it?"

"Because the land is theirs," answers his father, angrily.

"Who gave them the land, then?"

"Go and ask the overseer there. He 'll explain it to you. Do you see his stick?"

"But what will they do with this corn?"

"Thrash it and grind it, and then sell it."

"And what will they do with the money?"

"They 'll buy those cakes with it that you saw on the table when we passed."

The boy becomes quiet and thoughtful. But he has little time for thought. The men shout to his father to bring his cart nearer. He pulls the horse up to the stacks, climbs to the top of his load, unties the rope, and wearily hands the sheaves up one by one, straining his hernia [1] with each effort, while the boy holds the old mare, whom he has driven for the last two years, brushing away the flies as his father tells him, and wondering, for he cannot understand, why the land does not belong to those who work it, but to those young gentlemen who play about in fancy shirts and drink tea and eat cakes.

The boy thinks about this continually; when waking, when going to sleep, when attending the horses, but

[1] Owing to frequent overstrains, a great number of Russian peasants suffer from chronic hernia. — TR.

finds no answer. Every one says it is as it should be—and lives accordingly.

So he grows up. He marries. Children are born to him, and they ask the same question, and also wonder; and he answers them as his father answered him.

And they, too, living in poverty and subjection, labor for idle strangers.

So he lives, and so live all around him.

Wherever he goes it is the same; and, according to the stories of the passing pilgrims, it is the same everywhere. Everywhere laborers overwork themselves for idle, rich landlords; suffer from rupture, asthma, consumption; drink in despair; and die before their time. Women overstrain themselves, cooking, washing, mending, tending the cattle; wither, and grow prematurely old, from overpowering and incessant labor.

And everywhere those for whom they work indulge in horses and carriages and pet dogs, conservatories and games, from one year to another; each day from morning till evening dressing as if for a holiday, playing, eating and drinking, as not one of those who work for them could do, even on a holiday.

II

Why is this?

The first answer that presents itself to the rural laborer is, that it is owing to the land having been taken from him, and given to those who do not work it. So that the working peasant either has no land, or so little that he cannot support himself and his family on it, and must therefore either starve, or rent the land which adjoins his own but is possessed by those who do not work it; to rent it consenting of necessity to whatever terms are demanded.

So it appears at first sight, but, on second thoughts, there are peasants who have land sufficient to support them, and yet they too, all, or part of them, yield themselves to the same slavery.

Again, why is this?

It is because the peasant needs money to buy plows, scythes, horseshoes, and building materials, oil, tea, sugar, wine, rope, salt, matches, tobacco, and clothes; whereas the money he earns by selling his produce is continually being extorted from him in the shape of taxes direct and indirect, and by increasing the prices of the things he purchases, so that the majority of the peasants cannot procure the money they need otherwise than by selling themselves as wage slaves to those who have money.

And this is what the peasants, their wives and children, do. Some sell themselves in their own neighborhood, others sell themselves far away in the towns as servants, coachmen, wet-nurses, maids, attendants, waiters, and especially as factory workers, — whole families thus removing to the towns. Having sold themselves in the towns in these capacities, country folk lose the habits of agricultural work and simplicity of life; they grow accustomed to town food, clothing, and drink, and by these new habits yet further confirm their bondage.

Thus it is not merely want of land which causes the laborer to become enslaved to the rich; the causes are to be found also in the taxes and the high prices charged for the necessaries of life, and the luxurious town habits to which country laborers become accustomed when they abandon their villages. The present slavery originated in the land being taken away from the laborers, but it is maintained and increased by taxes, and is confirmed and strengthened by the circumstance that men lose the habit of agricultural labor, and become accustomed to town luxuries which can be obtained only by selling themselves as slaves to those who have money. And this slavery is continually spreading, and affirming, and establishing itself more and more.

In villages men live half famished, in increasing toil and privations — slaves of the landowners.

In towns and factories working-men live generation after generation, physically and morally depraved by

dull, monotonous, unhealthy, and unnatural labor — slaves of the capitalists.

Every year the condition of both classes becomes steadily worse. In the villages peasants are growing more and more destitute as greater numbers leave the country for the factories. In the towns, although the workmen do not get poorer, but, on the contrary, seem to become better off, yet they are growing more and more intemperate, more and more incapable of any other kind of labor than the one they are accustomed to, and are therefore falling more and more into the power of the factory owners.

Thus the power of the landowners and factory owners and of the wealthy classes generally is becoming stronger and stronger, while the condition of the working-men is becoming worse and worse. How can we escape from these conditions, and is any escape possible?

III

It would seem that deliverance from land slavery could be easily effected. The only thing required would be the recognition of a self-evident truth which men would never have doubted if they were not deceived — namely, that every man that is born has the same right to support himself from the land as he has to the air or the sunlight; and that therefore no man has the right to regard any land he does not cultivate as his own, or to prevent others from cultivating it.

But no Government will ever sanction this freedom, for most of the individuals who form Governments are landowners; and on the possession of this property is based their existence. They know this, and hold tight to their privilege, and defend it.

About thirty years ago Henry George suggested not only a reasonable but a perfectly practicable scheme of emancipating the land from private ownership. But neither in America nor in England (in France it is not even spoken of) has this scheme been accepted. Vari-

ous refutations of it have been attempted, but as they failed the idea was simply boycotted.

If this scheme was not accepted either in England or in America, there is even less hope of its being accepted in autocratic States, such as Germany, Austria, and Russia.

In Russia we have vast expanses of land usurped by private individuals, by the Tsar, and the Imperial family, and there is no hope of these people — who without their right to landed property would feel as helpless as fledglings fallen from their nest — relinquishing or permitting any infringement of their right without struggling to their utmost to maintain it.

Therefore, so long as power remains in the hands of Governments composed of landowners, there will be no emancipation of the land.

Deliverance from taxation is as impossible, and even more so. The whole Government, from its head, the Sovereign, down to the last official, lives by taxation. Therefore the suppression of taxes by Governments themselves is as impossible as the destruction of a man's only means of existence by the man himself.

It is true that some Governments are apparently attempting to relieve the people from the burden of general taxation by means of income taxes drawn from the wealthy classes, increasing such taxes as the income grows. But this transference from one class of taxation to another cannot alleviate the condition of the people, because the monied classes, *i.e.*, merchants, landowners, and capitalists, proportionately with the increase of taxation will augment the prices of rents, land, and all necessities of life, and will lower wages, so that the whole weight of taxation will still be borne by the working-classes.

Numbers of measures have been suggested by contemporary scientists for liberating the working-classes from the slavery caused by the capitalistic appropriation of the instruments of production; in consequence of which measures it is believed that the workmen's wages must continually increase, their working hours continu-

ally decrease, and ultimately all instruments of production must pass from the hands of the masters to those of the workers. The workers thus becoming possessed of all factories and workshops will no longer be obliged to surrender a part of their labor to the capitalist, but will receive full exchange for their toil, and all articles of consumption necessary to their life. This plan has been promulgated in England, America, and Germany for the last thirty years, but until now its realization has not been attained, nor is there the slightest approach to its fulfilment. Trades unions and strikes have been organized, by means of which the working-classes sometimes succeed in obtaining higher wages and a reduction of working hours; but as the Governments, bound by the capitalists, do not, and never will, permit the instruments of production to be taken from their present owners, the position remains practically unchanged. And as the men who receive higher pay for less hours increase their requirements, they thus remain in the same slavery.

So it is evident that the slavery of the working-classes will never be abolished while Governments continue: *first*, to maintain landed property in the hands of non-laboring landowners; *second*, to collect direct and indirect taxes; and *third*, to defend and uphold capitalistic property.

IV

"The slavery of the working-men is caused by the existence of Governments! If this bondage is the result of the Governments, then, for the necessary emancipation, it is indispensable that the existing Governments should be overthrown, and such new ones established as would grant free use of land, the suppression of taxation, and the transference of capital and factories into the hands and management of the workers."

There are some who proclaim the possibility of such a solution, and prepare for it. But, fortunately (for such action, always connected with violence and mur-

der, is immoral, and detrimental to the end in view, as repeatedly demonstrated in history), such an undertaking is impossible at the present time.

The days are long past when Governments naïvely believed they were ordained for the welfare of the people and took no measure to insure themselves against revolutions (moreover, they had none of the modern means of communication, telegraphs, telephones, railways), and, consequently, were easily overthrown, as in England in 1640, in France during the Great Revolution and after, and in Germany in '48. Since then there has been only one revolution, in 1871, and that under peculiar circumstances.

At the present day, revolutions and the upsetting of Governments are simply impossible. Impossible because Governments, being now aware of their uselessness and perniciousness, and of the fact that no one any longer believes in their sanctity, are guided only by the instinct of self-preservation, and, using all the means they possess, are continually on their guard against anything which might not only overthrow, but even shake, their authority.

Every Government at the present time has an army of officials united by railways, telegraphs, and telephones; it has fortresses and prisons, with all the newest improvements of photography and anthropometrical measurements; explosive mines, artillery, and rifles, and all the most perfected instruments of coercion in existence. And as soon as any new appliance appears, it is immediately adopted by Governments for their purpose of self-preservation.

They maintain organizations of spies, of bribed clergy, bribed scientists and artists, and a corrupted press. And above all, every Government has at its disposal a mass of officers perverted by patriotism, money, and hypnotism, and millions of physically strong and morally undeveloped twenty-one-year-old children called soldiers; or a conglomeration of hirelings stupefied by discipline and ready for any crime their commanders may direct them to commit.

Therefore it is impossible at the present time to abolish by force a Government which possesses such resources and is continually on its guard. No Government will ever permit it. And as long as Governments exist they will maintain taxation and private ownership of land and capital, because great landowners and capitalists, and officials paid from the taxes, form the Governments.

Every attempt of the working-men to take possession of the land belonging to private owners will certainly end as it has always ended, by soldiers coming and punishing and dispersing those who are endeavoring to get the land. Every attempt to avoid paying taxes will also end in the same way — soldiers will come, will seize what is required to meet the taxes, and severely chastise those who refuse what is demanded. This will also happen to those who will attempt — I do not say to seize the instruments of production and the factories — but even to merely sustain a strike or prevent other workmen from lowering the price of labor; soldiers will come and disperse the offenders, as is always occurring in Europe and Russia.

While soldiers are in the hands of Governments which exist by taxation, and are bound by the owners of land and capital, no revolution is possible. Therefore, so long as Governments have the armies at their command, the system of society will always be in accordance with the wishes of those who have that command.

V

The question therefore naturally presents itself — who are these soldiers?

They are the very men who have been robbed of their land, and from whom taxes are extorted, and who are wage slaves to the capitalists.

Why then do these soldiers go against themselves? They cannot do otherwise, because, by a long course of training, so-called "religious" education and hypnotism,

they have been reduced to a state in which they can no longer reason, but only obey.

The Governments, having in their hands the money extorted from the people, bribe with this money various kinds of officials to enlist soldiers, and then hire military commanders to train them (*i.e.*, to deprive these men of their human consciousness), but above all it bribes with this money schoolmasters and clergy, who in various ways instil into children and adults the idea that soldiering — *i.e.*, preparation for murder — is not only an occupation useful to mankind, but a righteous and godly one.

And year after year, although these men see that they and their like contribute to the enslaving of the people by the wealthy and governing classes, they submissively continue to become soldiers, and having done so, unmurmuringly fulfil all that is demanded of them, be it not only the evident ill-treatment of their fellows, but even the murder of their parents.

Bribed officials, military teachers, and the clergy prepare soldiers by stupefying them. Soldiers, at the command of their superiors, and with threats of imprisonment and death, despoil the land of its wealth by means of taxes, and appropriate the profits of factories and commerce in the interests of the ruling classes. In their turn these ruling classes spend part of this money in bribing the officials, military teachers, and clergy,— and so the circle is complete, and no escape is possible.

VI

The solution proposed by revolutionists to meet force by force, is manifestly impossible. Governments who already possess a disciplined force will never permit the formation of a similarly disciplined opposing force. All such attempts during the last century show how futile they are.

Nor can the solution be found in the suggestion of certain Socialists: to organize a great economical power

which would be able to overcome the united forces of capitalism. The trades unions will never, with their few millions of money, be able to compete with the economic power of multi-millionaires always upheld by military force.

Equally impracticable is the proposal of other Socialists: that of gaining the majority in Parliaments. No majority in Parliament will be able to carry anything inimical to the Government so long as the Government has the troops at its command. If at any moment the decisions of a Parliament were to threaten the interests of the ruling classes, the Government would dissolve and disperse such a Parliament, as always has been and ever will be the case while the army is in the hands of the Government.

The dissemination of socialistic ideas among the troops will not effect anything. The hypnotism of the army is so cleverly devised that the most free-thinking and intelligent man, while he remains in the army, will always fulfil what is demanded of him.

Escape, therefore, is to be found neither in revolutions nor through Socialism.

If there be a way of escape it is one hitherto unrecognized, which nevertheless can alone undoubtedly abolish the whole complex, ingenious, and ancient governmental machinery for the enslavement of the people.

It consists in refusing to enter the military service while one has not yet become subjected to the stupefying and depraving influence of discipline. This solution is the only one, and at the same time it is the undeniable obligation of every individual. It is the only possible way out, because the existing violence is based on these three actions of Governments: on the spoliation of the people, on the distribution of the stolen money to those who organize the robbery, and on the recruiting of the people into the army.

No private individual can hinder the Government from robbing the people by means of recruited troops; nor can he hinder it from distributing the money collected from the people amongst those whose help is re-

quired for recruiting soldiers and stupefying them; but he can prevent people from becoming soldiers by refusing to be one himself, and by making clear to others the substance of the fraud by which they are persuaded to enter military service.

Not only *can* every separate individual do this, he is *bound* to do it, because enlistment into military service is the renunciation of all religion, whichsoever a man may have professed (all religions forbid murder), — it is the renunciation of human dignity, and the voluntary submission to a slavery for the one purpose of murder. In this lies the only possible, absolutely necessary and inevitable escape from the slavery in which the ruling classes hold the working people.

The way of escape is neither in destroying force by force, nor in taking possession of the instruments of production, nor in Parliamentary opposition to Governments, but in every man himself, personally, becoming conscious of the truth, professing it, and acting in accordance with it. As to the truth that man must not kill his fellow-man, this is so well recognized that every one is aware of it.

If only men would apply their energies, not to external results, but to that which causes these results, — to their own life, — then the power of violence and evil which at present holds and afflicts humanity would melt like wax before a fire.

RECENT PRIVATE AND OTHER LETTERS

On the Religious Relation to Life

(*February* 2, 1902)

DEAR N . . ., — I quite agree with what you write. I have been approaching this conviction gradually, and have now definitely reached it, as I have expressed in my article "What is Religion and what is its Essence?"

I disagree with you only in one but very important point: It is true that, at the present time, and especially amongst us in Russia, the Church and State deceit present the chief obstacle to the establishment of or even the approach to the Christian life, but one cannot say that the strife with these deceits represents the chief business of a Christian. The business of a Christian, by the means of which he attains all his purposes, including the one which at present in Russia stands before him, is everywhere and always one: to increase one's fire and let it give light to men. But directing all one's attention, all one's efforts, to some one particular object, as for instance, the life of manual labor, propaganda, or, as in this case, strife with this or that deceit, is always a mistake, like that of a man who, during an inundation, instead of directing the water through the chief outlet or repairing the dike which resists the water, should construct dams in his own street, overlooking the fact that the water will come in from other directions.

When I received your letter I wished to write to you reminding you that in strife one should be as wise as serpents and as meek as doves; but this is not enough: one should not for a moment forget the essential gen-

eral aim, and not let oneself be carried away by efforts to attain one particular object. This does not mean that one should not fight against deceits (when one knows that they are the greatest one will do so involuntarily), but one should fight only when the struggle follows as a result of the general effort toward perfection.

Another comparison. One has to protect houses from the possibility of a fire being communicated to all. One can cut green branches and stick them into the earth between the houses. And this may appear to be effective for a day or two. One can also plant small trees, and when they take root and grow up, this will be effective permanently.

It is necessary that our activity should have roots. And these roots are in our submissiveness to the will of God, in our personal life being dedicated to perfecting oneself and increasing love.

My physical health continues to be bad, but spiritually I feel very well, and I can work and do work as well as I am able, more seriously in view of the approaching end.

To the Swedish Group of Scientists, Writers, and Artists, who had expressed their Regret that the Nobel Prize was not given to Tolstoï

(*February* 2, 1902)

Gentlemen, — The fact that the Nobel Prize was not accorded to me was doubly pleasant: first, because it saved me from the painful necessity of dealing in some way with money, — generally regarded as very necessary and useful, but which I regard as the source of every kind of evil; and secondly, because it has afforded to people whom I respect the opportunity of expressing their sympathy with me, for which I thank you all from my heart.

To a Personal Friend

(*December* 15, 1901)

(This letter refers to a revolutionary pamphlet appealing to workmen to take up arms against the Government, secretly circulated in Russia in large numbers. — Eds.)

The pamphlet about street disturbances is very pitiful. Besides being immoral it is impracticable and simply stupid. If I were the Government I should publish such pamphlets at the expense of the State and spread them in millions of copies. Nothing could more radically undermine or render impossible the confidence of the people in those who share the views expressed in this and similar publications.

The proposal of the pamphlet is immoral, because while a soldier has been brought by a whole series of hypnotic suggestions to the condition where he is obliged either to kill or to suffer martyrdom, and is besides so bewildered that he does not see the sin of what he is doing — the man who would obey the author of this pamphlet would be preparing for murder and committing it of his own free will, incited by nothing but the author's very doubtful assertions of the temporal advantages for himself and his brothers of his murderous action.

The proposal is impracticable, because it is inconceivable that unarmed, undisciplined men could ever disarm armed and disciplined men ; and if it were to happen anywhere, — the unlikely chances of which are nine hundred and ninety-nine to one, — then those who succeeded would immediately be crushed by regular military forces from other parts.

And it is stupid because if those people who wish to liberate themselves from murder and preparation for murder were to begin to prepare for murder themselves, they would give their foe the only legitimate excuse for using against them all kinds of violence, and even murder, and of excusing all those committed previously.

I do *not* think it is necessary to make a declaration that I am not in agreement with those who share the views of this pamphlet which advocates street disturbances. For nearly thirty years now I have been repeating from all sides one and the same thing — that the whole matter lies in the spiritual condition of men, that all violence is a sin, and that the violence of those who fight against violence is absolutely senseless. And therefore no sincere man will confound me with revolutionary coercionists; as to an insincere man being able to invent against me any calumny which may be needful to him, against this there is no means of safeguarding oneself; and besides, it is not necessary.

To an Italian Press Correspondent

(*September* 22, 1901)

My reply to your first question, as to "What the Russian people think of the Franco-Russian alliance?" is this: The Russian people — the real people — have not the slightest idea of the existence of this alliance; but even if they knew about it, I am certain that as all nations are for them all the same, their common sense as well as their feeling of humanity would suggest to them that this exclusive alliance with one particular nation in preference to all others can have no other object than to drag them into enmity and perhaps war with other nations, and therefore that this alliance would be abhorrent to them in the highest degree.

To the question, "Does the Russian nation share the enthusiasm of the French?" I think I can answer not only that the Russian people do not share this enthusiasm (if indeed it really exists, of which I am doubtful), but if they knew all that is done and said in France about this alliance they would rather experience a feeling of suspicion and antipathy to the nation which without any rational reason suddenly begins to manifest toward them an unexpected and exclusive love.

Concerning the third question, "What is the significance of this alliance for civilization in general?" I think I am right in presuming that as this alliance can have no other object than war or threats of war against other nations, it cannot fail to be harmful. As to the significance of this alliance for the two nationalities concerned, it is clear that as in the past so also in the future it will be positive evil for both. The French Government, the Press, and all that portion of French Society which praises this alliance, have already been and will still further be drawn into concessions and compromises contrary to the traditions of a free and humane nation, in order to pretend or really to be in agreement with the intention and feelings of the most despotic, retrograde, and cruel Government of all Europe. And this has been and will be a great injury to France. Whereas for Russia this alliance has already had and will still have, if it continues, a yet more pernicious influence. Since the establishment of this ill-fated alliance, the Russian Government, which once was afraid of European opinion and took it into consideration, at present no longer troubles itself about it, being conscious of the support of this strange friendship on the part of the nation which is regarded as the most civilized in the world, and it is daily becoming more and more reactionary, despotic, and cruel. So that this strange and unfortunate alliance cannot in my opinion have any other than the most negative influence on the welfare of both nations as well as on civilization in general.

To a Swiss Pastor

(*August* 26, 1901)

Dear Sir, — I received your letter, and thank you for the feelings which you express in it. I am also very thankful to you for the extracts from A. Sabatier. I regret very much that I am acquainted only by name with this remarkable man. The extracts you quote

concerning his understanding of Christianity prove to me that I ought to be in complete unity of thought and feeling with him, as well as with you and all who share your views.

There is, however, one point in which I do not agree with you, namely, your idea as to the necessity of a Church, and, therefore, of ministers. That is, of persons invested with a certain authority. I cannot forget the 8th and 9th verses of the 23d chapter of Matthew, not because these verses are from the Gospel, but because it is for me a perfectly evident truth that there cannot be any ministers, teachers, and guides, amongst Christians, and that it is precisely this transgression of the Gospel law which has hitherto almost completely nullified the meaning of the true Christian teaching.

To my mind the chief meaning of the Christian teaching is the establishment of direct communion between God and man. Every man who takes upon himself the rôle of intercessor in this communion hinders those he wishes to guide from entering into direct communion with God, and, which is still worse, he himself completely loses the possibility of living in a Christian way. I think it is the height of pride, a sin which more than anything else estranges one from God — to say to oneself "I am capable of helping others to live well, and of saving their souls." All that a man can do who wishes to follow the Christian teaching is to endeavor to perfect himself to the full measure of his strength, to use in this work of self-perfection all his powers, all his energy. This is the only method of influencing one's neighbors and of helping them on the way of righteousness.

If a Church does exist it is given to no one to know its limits, and no one can know whether he belongs to it or not. The most that a man can desire or hope is to strive to become a part of it (this Church), but no one can be certain that he has indeed become a part, and even less can he imagine that he has the possibility and the right of guiding others.

I beg you to excuse the blunt way in which I have

expressed my opinion contrary to yours, and to believe in the feelings of sympathy and respect with which I remain at your service.

To a Russian Priest

(*August* 15, 1901)

Dear Brother T . . .,—Your letter afforded me great pleasure. You are the fourth priest in whom I meet a complete sympathy, not with my views, but with the essence of the teaching of Jesus, the true meaning of which is accessible to children and cannot call forth differences. And this is very joyful.

One thing in your letter gave me a little anxiety. It is your allusion to metaphysics and the Church. I am afraid you have yourself built up some system of metaphysics, or that you adhere to the Church metaphysics, which affords you the possibility of remaining a priest though holding your views. Judging by the fact that you have been in orders for ten years I conclude that you are yet a young man, and might be my son if not grandson; and, therefore, I will allow myself to give you unsolicited advice as to how, in my opinion, a priest ought to act who has freed himself from superstition, and understood the teaching of Jesus in its true meaning, and wishes to follow it.

When men find themselves in a position incompatible with the teaching of Jesus (as a soldier, or a priest, for instance), they construct or accept some complicated, confused system of metaphysics which is intended to justify that position. It is from this snare that I wish to warn you. For a Christian there can be no such complicated metaphysics. All that one can call metaphysics in the Christian teaching consists of the simple, universally comprehensible proposition that "All men are the sons of God — Brothers; and therefore should love both their Father and their brothers, and accordingly behave with others as they would wish others to behave with them." I think that all further metaphysics are from the Evil One, and are invented only

to reconcile the incompatible position we are in with the Christian teaching. There are also priests (I know such) who, feeling the incompatibility of their position with the pure understanding of the Christian teaching, try to justify themselves by the consideration that in their position they can better struggle with superstition and spread the Christian truth. I think such an assertion is even more false. In a religious cause the end cannot justify the means, were it only for this reason — that means which diverge from the truth destroy all possibility of attaining an end which consists of the teaching of truth. But above all, no man is called to teach others (Matt. xxiii. 8–9), but only to strive to make himself perfect in truth and love. And only by such striving (without any thought of influencing others) can man influence others.

Pardon me that I contravene statements you have not said and perhaps do not think, but having received a strong and joyful impression from your letter I wished to express all that I think about the tragic position of a priest who has learnt the truth, and of the way out of this position, and of its dangers.

The best solution of this position, an heroic way, is, I think, that the priest having called together his parishioners should come out to them on to the rostrum, and instead of conducting the service and bowing to the *ikons*, should bow down to the ground to the people, begging them to pardon him for having led them into error.

The next solution is that which was chosen ten years ago by a remarkable man, now dead, a priest from the College of Viatka, whom I knew, and who served in the diocese of ——. He declared to his Bishop that owing to a change of views he could not continue to be a priest. He was called to Stavropol, and the authorities and his family so tormented him that he consented to resume his priestly office. But in less than a year he could no longer bear it, and again refused, and gave up his orders. His wife abandoned him. All these sufferings so exhausted him that he

died, like a saint, without betraying his convictions, and above all without losing love.

This is the second solution. But I know how terribly difficult it is owing to the family relations and to the circumstances of priests, and therefore I quite understand and do not at all condemn a priest who might remain in this position, notwithstanding that he no longer believes in his work. The only thing I have to say, and which I allow myself to advise (I advise the same thing to those Christians from whom military service is demanded), is that I should not use my reason to invent devices which make it appear that whilst doing what is wrong I am doing well.

If man only keeps the truth before his eyes in all its purity, is not untruthful to himself, then he will find a way to act in the best manner according to his strength. A priest who understands the true Christian teaching, should, I think, like every other Christian, firstly, strive to know the truth in its purity and completeness, independently of his position; and, secondly, to reform his position in the direction of the truth he has seen, according to his strength. (This approach is made of itself if the man is sincere.) As to how far a man will approach (for a priest this is especially difficult, his position being not only distant from, but contrary, hostile to, the truth), to what extent, and how he will approach — this is a matter between himself and God, concerning which outsiders cannot judge.

I greet you fraternally, — Yours, with love.

To the Secretary of the Manchester Tolstoï Society

(*August* 15, 1901)

Dear Friend, — You were right in guessing that I should be interested in the Tolstoï Society. So I was. But I am sorry that I have enough vanity left to be interested. I have always held the opinion — and it

cannot change — that to be a member of the old Society started by God at the beginning of conscious humanity is more profitable for oneself and for mankind than to be a member of the limited Societies which we organize for the sake of attaining the ends we are able to conceive. I think the preference we give to our own Societies is due to the fact that the part we play in them seems to us of much greater importance than the one we play in God's Great Society. But this is an illusion only: all the three modes of activity which you mention in your letter will be more surely attained by a man who regards himself as a member of God's Great Society than by a member of Tolstoï's Society. Such a man who is earnest, as I know you are, will, firstly, spread as much as he can the ideas that gave him peace of Conscience and energy in life without minding whether they are Tolstoï's or anybody else's.

He will, secondly, try with all his might to induce people to speak their mind on the most important questions of life.

He will, thirdly, try to give every person with whom he comes in contact as much joy and happiness as it is in his power to do, and will also help those who get into difficulties through strictly following the teaching of Christ.

A man belonging to God's Great Society will also perform many other useful Christian acts which have neither been foreseen nor formulated by Tolstoï's or any other Society.

I own there are some advantages in the union of persons of the same mind who form societies; but the drawbacks of such organizations are much greater than their advantages, I think. And so I think that for myself it would be a great loss to change my membership of God's Great Society for the most seemingly useful participation in any human Society.

I am very sorry, dear friend, to differ from your opinion, but I cannot think otherwise.[1]

[1] This letter was written in English. — Eds.

To A . . . M . . . on the Same Subject

(*October* 5, 1901)

I have received the letters,[1] and have, of course, read them with great interest. . . . Please transmit to them that not only have I nothing against the existence and the name of a Tolstoï Society, — the lower part of my being feels pleasure at the idea that my writings will be the subject of the attention of religious people and will be better understood; but that which is highest in me opposes this thought, and as I myself desire to be free from all bonds and all exclusiveness in order that nothing should distract me from direct immediate communion with God, so also I should desire the same for my friends near to me in spirit. Tell them that what I wrote to them I wrote guided by love, and that I was glad to see from their letters that they are aware of the danger accompanying all exclusiveness, of which I had warned them.

An Earlier Letter and a Diary Entry on "Tolstoïism"

To speak of "Tolstoïism," to seek guidance, to inquire about my solution of questions, is a great and a gross error.

There has not been, nor is there, any "teaching" of mine. There exists only the one eternal universal teaching of the Truth, which, for me, for us, is especially clearly expressed in the Gospels. This teaching invites man to accept his sonship to God, and therefore his freedom or his subjection (call it as you like) — freedom from the influence of the world, and subjection to God, to His will; and as soon as man has understood this teaching he fully enters into direct communion with God and has no longer anything to ask of any one.

[1] Of the members of the Society. — Tr.

It is like a man who has to descend a river which has overflowed and flooded the surrounding fields. While the man is not in the center of the stream but in its flooded parts, he himself has either to swim or to row, and here he may be guided by other swimmers. Here I could help to direct others while myself approaching the bed of the stream. But the moment we have entered the channel there is not, nor can there be, any guide. We are all borne down by the power of the current, all in one direction, and those who were behind may turn out in front.

If a man asks which way he should swim, it only proves that he has not yet reached the bed of the stream, and that the one whom he asks is a bad guide, since he has not been able to bring him to it, *i.e.*, to that position in which one cannot ask because it is senseless to ask. How can I ask whither one should advance, when the stream with irresistible power is carrying me along in a joyful direction?

Men who submit to a leader, who believe and obey him, are undoubtedly straying in the dark together with their leader.

* * * * * * *

The other day a girl came to me asking the question (so usual, so artificial), What must she do to be useful? Talking with her it became clear to me that the great evil from which millions suffer is not so much that they live in positive wickedness as that they do not live according to their own conscience. Instead of their own conscience people take some other person's conscience, higher than their own (Christ's most frequently), and being obviously without power to live according to this other conscience they conform neither to that nor to their own and so live without conscience. I advised this young lady to live not by my conscience, as she wished, but by her own. But she, poor girl, does not even know whether she has a conscience of any kind or not. This is a great evil, and it is most important that men should develop, make clear to themselves, their conscience, and then live

according to that conscience; and not, as all do, choose another person's conscience unattainable to themselves, and then live without conscience, and lie, lie, lie for the sake of appearing to live wholly in conformity with this other selected person's conscience.

I therefore truly prefer a man without principles, a pleasure-loving, unreasoning man, who resists discussion, to one who lives according to another one's conscience and is therefore without any conscience. The former may develop a conscience; the latter never, unless he return to the independence of the former.

To a Persian

(*July* 24, 1901)

I AM very thankful for the poem you have sent me. It is of the highest interest, and I think that the propagation of the idea it contains will be very useful not only to the people of your country but also to the inhabitants of all countries. I quite share the idea expressed by the writer — that in order to cure evil one should find its cause, and try to destroy THAT. He says that the cause of evil is egotism and ignorance. But I should like to add, however, to the word ignorance — "ignorance of true religion." By true religion I mean a religion which is within the reach of all, founded upon reason common to all, and therefore obligatory on every one.

The principle of this religion is expressed in the Gospel by the words: "Do unto others as thou wouldst wish that others should do unto thee." This is the law and the prophets. If this principle were recognized as the chief religious principle by all men, then egotism, which is the readiness to sacrifice one's neighbors' welfare to attain one's own ends, would disappear of itself. So that I recognize as the cause of evil in general, and of wars in particular, solely the IGNORANCE OF TRUE RELIGION.

Nor do I altogether agree with you with regard to the brotherhood you suppose possible between States and their rulers. I think that the State which is formed and maintained always by violence not only excludes brotherhood but is its direct contrary.

If men are brothers there can be neither emperor, nor minister, nor general, nor subject, nor soldier. Amongst brothers no one can have the right to command, nor the duty to obey. All must obey God — not men, whose orders are mostly contrary to the law of God.

According to my opinion wars will only cease when every individual has imbibed the religious principle of not doing to others that which he does not want them to do to him, to such an extent that no one will feel able to accept military service; because military service is nothing else than preparation for murder, the act most contrary of all to the principle of reciprocity; because every man prizes his life above everything, and, therefore, to desire to take it from him is to do to another what one least desires done to oneself.

I think that everywhere there are men who profess the true religion, like the Bâbists in Persia, and that notwithstanding the persecutions to which these men are everywhere and always exposed, their ideas will spread more and more, and triumph in the end over the barbarity and ferocity of Governments, and especially over the frauds which Governments try to maintain on their peoples. It will not be the Governments which will abolish war. On the contrary Governments will always endeavor to excite national hatreds in order to render necessary the armies which alone constitute their power and their reason for existence.

Wars can be abolished only by the individuals who suffer by them. They will be abolished only when true religion is so widely spread that the majority of men will be ready to suffer violence rather than commit it, and will render war absolutely impossible by refusing military service.

To the Editor of a Hindoo Paper

(*July*, 1901)

Dear Sir, — I thank you for your interesting letter. I quite agree with you that your nation cannot accept the solution of the social problem which Europe offers it, and which in reality is not a solution.

A society or collection of men founded on force is not only in a primitive state, but also in a very dangerous position. The connection which unites such a society can at any time be sundered, and the greatest calamities overtake it. All European States are in this position.

The only solution of the social problem for rational beings gifted with the capacity of love consists in the abolition of force, and in the organization of a society founded on mutual respect and rational principles voluntarily accepted by all. Such a condition can be obtained only by the development of true religion. By this term I imply the fundamental principles of all religions, which are: First, the consciousness of the divine essence of the human soul; and, secondly, regard for its manifestation.

Your religion is very ancient, and very profound in its metaphysical definition of the relation of man to the spiritual All — to "Atman"; but I think it has been perverted in its moral, *i.e.*, practical, adaptation to life owing to the existence of caste. This practical adaptation to life was, as far as I know, established by the Jainists, Buddhists, and some other sects, such as Kabir Panchis, in which the fundamental rule is the sanctity of life and therefore the prohibition of taking the life of any living being, especially man.

All the evil which you experience, — starvation, and, more important still, the humiliation of your nation by factory life, will continue as long as your people consent to become soldiers. Parasites feed only upon unclean bodies. Your nation must conserve its moral purity,

and in the degree in which it will be pure from murder, or readiness for murder, in that degree will it be free from the *régime* from which it at present suffers. I quite agree with you that you ought to be thankful to the English for all they have done for you — for your welfare — and that you should assist them in all that leads to the civilization of your nation; but you should not help Englishmen in their "Government by Coercion," and under no consideration participate in an organization founded on violence.

Therefore it seems to me that the duty of every educated Hindoo consists in the abolition of all the old superstitions which conceal from the masses the elements of true religion, *i.e.*, the consciousness of the divine essence of the human soul and regard for the life of every living being without exception, and in spreading these principles as much as possible.

I think that these principles are implied, if not actually contained, in your ancient and profound religion, and require only further development and liberation from the covering which conceals them. I think that only such a mode of action can relieve the Hindoos from those evils to which they are subjected, and will serve as the most effective means for attaining the aim toward which you are striving.

Pardon me for so frankly expressing my opinion, and believe me, — Yours truly.

To the Editor of the Bulgarian Paper "Free Thought," concerning the Fate of a Young Man who had been tortured in the Penal Battalion for refusing Military Service on Religious Grounds

(1901)

From your letter I can see that the Bulgarian Government is not only brutal and cruel, but also strikingly stupid. (I say the Government, because I am sure that were it not for the demands of the higher Government

the lower officials would not have dealt in so barbarously cruel a way with this youth, who should at least inspire sympathy and respect.) It is comprehensible that the Governments of large States such as France, Germany, and the most foul Government of my country, can and even must act cruelly with such men as Shopof, who by their life and actions indicate the way of moral progress along which humanity is advancing. They (*i.e.*, these Governments) have no other choice, being maintained by brute force (while moral progress consists in substituting for brute force the consciousness of the brotherhood of men); and, therefore, such Governments must repress all manifestations of true progress, as they do, from the instinct of self-preservation. But small nationalities and States, such as Bulgaria, Servia, Switzerland, and others, obviously can attain nothing by brute force. In the struggle by force they will always be crushed by States immeasurably more powerful — by Austria, Germany, England, and Russia.

The rôle of small nationalities does not consist in monkey-like imitations of the large States, addicting themselves to militarism and all the horrors and cruelties connected with it (as we see they do, be it only in this little case with Shopof), but, being free from the burden and brutality of war, in their advancing, according to their power, along the way of moral progress, and indicating this way to the great nations.

This is what Germany did — although not so much in the way of moral, as of esthetic and scientific progress — when she was divided into little duchies and had not yet tasted the poison of brute force which spiritually killed her. Thus Switzerland acts, by showing men an example and the possibility of a combination of freedom and good order.

How well it would be if your Bulgarian nation bethought itself in time, and instead of raising an army, strengthening its discipline, and torturing men, merely that it should not remain behind its straying neighbors who imitate the big nations, and fighting them — if your good, industrious, capable nation were to use all

its strength to establish at home freedom and equality, thus serving as an example for others, instead of trying to do something it can't do — frighten its neighbors with its disciplined army. How well this would be!

Whereas such actions as the torture of Shopof not only cover with ignominy the Government which commits them, but also inspire a bad opinion of the society which tacitly submits to such dishonest things. Shopof is intentionally being tortured as a soldier, whereas he from the very beginning refused to be enlisted in the Army; and that not out of caprice or unwillingness to be useful to men, but because military service, having murder for its object, is not compatible with that Christian teaching professed both by the People and the Government of Bulgaria. And therefore the trial of Shopof as of a soldier who has violated discipline is a lie and a fraud, perpetrated by the Government and its slaves toward a helpless, honest man. Even placing oneself on the standpoint of this Government, which may fear that no one will serve in the Army if it leave unpunished Shopof's refusal, it is clear that all it can do, not only for the maintenance of justice, but also from the instinct of self-preservation, is to compel him to go through some social service not in opposition to his faith.

On Reason, Faith, and Prayer

(*January*, 1901)

I. — REASON

You ask me what my Christian creed is. You have read my "Short Exposition of the Gospels," and you know, therefore, how I understand the teaching of Jesus.

If, however, you wish to know what I consider the essential meaning of the teaching: in my opinion the essential meaning, which I should like to transmit to all

mankind, and in which I wish all children could be educated, consists in this, that *man has come into the world not by his own will but by the will of Him that sent him.* And that man should know what He who sent him into this world requires, reason has been bestowed on him, by the help of which, if he truly desire it, he can always know the will of God — he can always know what He who sent him into the world requires of him.

The Pharisees and Scribes of our time always say that one should not believe in reason, because it will deceive, but that one should believe them and they will not deceive. But what they say is untrue. If one believes in men, and, as the Gospels say, "in the traditions of men," then we shall all crawl astray from each other like blind puppies, and hate each other, as we do now: the Christian Churchman hates the Mohammedan, the Mohammedan hates the Christian, and the Christians themselves hate each other; the (Greek) Orthodox hates the Catholic, the Old Believer[1] hates the Orthodox, and so on; but if we adhere to the voice of our reason, we shall all unite, because reason is one and the same for all, and reason alone unites men and does not hinder the manifestation of the mutual love natural to them.

Reason unites us, not only with our contemporaries, but with men who lived two thousand years before us, and with those who will live after us. Thus we profit by all that has been produced by the reason of Isaiah, and Jesus, and Buddha, and Socrates, and Confucius, and of all the men who lived before us and believed in reason and served it. "Act toward others as thou wouldst wish them to act toward thee; do not revenge thyself against those who do evil unto thee, but return good for evil; be abstinent, chaste; not only refrain from killing people, but be not angry against them; keep peace with all," and much else. All this is the product of reason, and all this has been preached equally

[1] An ancient Russian sect. — Tr.

by Buddhists, Confucianists, Christians, Taoists, and the Greek and the Egyptian sages. It is also preached by all good people of our time, and all agree with it.

And, therefore, I repeat, the chief meaning of the Christian teaching consists, in my opinion, in what is expressed in the Gospels, in the parable of the Workmen in the Vineyard, for whose use a garden had been given under condition of a payment to the owner, but who imagined it their own; and in the parable of the Talents, where the meaning is that men must fulfil the will of Him who sent them into life, which will consists in men becoming perfect, "as their Heavenly Father," as it is said in another place; *i.e.*, in approaching as near as they can to supreme perfection.

That the will of God consists only in this is also demonstrated to us by reason, and so clearly that there can be no dissension nor doubt. Every man who has thought of it cannot but see that in all the undertakings of life man does and will meet obstacles, and that only in this work (perfection) need man meet no obstacle; that is, in perfecting himself, clearing his soul from evil, and doing good to all that lives. Neither is this work arrested, destroyed, nor hindered by death, which stops, destroys, and renders meaningless all other worldly undertakings. Death neither arrests nor destroys this work, because the man who fulfils the will of Him who sent him, knowing that what he does is necessary to the Master, peacefully performs it here as long as he has the power, and knows that death destroys neither himself nor his relation to the Master, but that "there" also, although in quite different form, he will be in the same dependence on the Master, and have the same joy of a continually growing participation in the life and the work of the Master, *i.e.*, God.

It is thus I understand the teaching of Jesus; thus would I wish it to be understood by all; and in this I wish all children could be educated. Not to blindly believe the things told them about God and life; and to believe the things they do believe, not because they are told they are the utterances of prophets, or Christ, but

because their reason tells them they are true. Reason is older and more reliable than all the writings and all the traditions. It existed even when there were no traditions and no writings, and it is given to each of us direct from God.

The Gospel statement that all sins shall be pardoned except the sin against the Holy Ghost, in my opinion refers directly to the assertion that one should not believe in reason. Indeed, if we do not believe in the reason given us from God, in what shall we believe? Are we to believe those very men who wish to compel us to accept what is inconsistent with the reason given us by God?

II.—FAITH

You ask, what will give a weak, degenerated, depraved man (as we all are), amidst the snares surrounding him on all sides — what will give such a man the power to live a Christian life?

Instead of answering, and before answering, this question, I will ask you, What does it really mean?

We have become so accustomed to the question that it appears quite natural and intelligible, whereas it is not only not natural and not intelligible, but exceedingly strange and curious for every rational man not educated in the superstitions of the Church faith.

Why does n't the smith hammering iron, or the peasant plowing the field, ask where he will obtain the strength to do the work he has undertaken, but instead does it to the best of his strength, makes mistakes, tries to correct them, becomes tired, halts, leaves his work for a time, rests, and again betakes himself to it? Is not every servant of God in the same position, when trying to live the Christian life, to fulfil the will of God he has become conscious of? Just in the same way such a man, if he be sincere, will live a Christian life to the best of his strength — obey the will of God, and if he makes mistakes will correct himself, will become tired, and rest, and again betake himself to the

same life-work — that of approaching to the best of his strength that perfection of the Heavenly Father indicated to him.

The question as to where one should get the strength for the Christian life only shows that some one has persuaded men that certain means exist, by whose aid men, without their own incessant efforts, strife, without falls, repentance, upheavals, again falls, and again upheavals, can obtain the necessary strength for a good, saintly life. It is this very superstition, that man does not approach perfection by his own slow efforts, but can purify himself all at once and become a saint, which is one of the most terrible and pernicious errors, — and it is this which is strenuously preached by all the Churches. Some assure their disciples that through the sacraments of baptism, confession, communion, man is freed from sin; others affirm that one is freed from sin by faith in the redemption, because the Christ-God has purified us with his blood. Both the one and the other teach that besides this we are purified by petitionary prayer to God that He should pardon our sins and make us good — and not that we should ourselves strive to become better.

This superstition is very pernicious because it contains a deceit.

The deceit consists, firstly, in the supposition that man can become quite pure and saintly; whereas for a living man this is impossible. Man cannot be perfect and sinless; he can only more or less *approach* perfection, regarding this approach as the sole meaning of his life. I even think that life after death will again consist only in advance toward perfection, although in a completely different form. In this personal effort toward perfection lies the whole meaning and joy of life. And therefore if perfection were attainable by external means we should be deprived of the very essence of life.

A deceit, secondly, because through it man's efforts are withdrawn from the thing he has to do — from improving himself — and are directed toward something unnecessary. To rely on sacraments, or belief in

the redemption, or prayer, contributing to the perfecting of oneself, is like a smith, while holding in his hands the iron and the hammer, and possessing an anvil and a well-lighted fire, trying to devise some other means of forging the iron besides striking it with a hammer, or praying to God to give him the strength to do the work.

One might pray to God, and devise other means for perfecting oneself, in the event of obstacles being put before us in this work and if we ourselves had not the strength for it. But in this work of perfecting oneself, or the Christian life, or the fulfilment of the will of God, God does not demand of us something we cannot do, — on the contrary He has taken care to give us all we are in need of for fulfilling His will.

We are here in this world as in a wayside inn in which the master has arranged everything really needful to us travelers, and has gone away himself leaving instructions how we should behave in this temporary shelter. All that we require is within our reach! Then what other means should we devise, and for what should we pray? We have only *to obey our instructions!* So also in our spiritual life: all that we require is given us, and the rest is in our own hands.

It is clear that if we wish to become saints all of a sudden, or to feel ourselves justified, and desire besides this to be rich — if we desire that our friends and ourselves shall not be subject to disease or to death, and that we shall always have good harvests, and that our foes shall be destroyed — then we, too, must ask all this of God as it is done in our churches.

But God has not destined us to anything of this kind. He not only has not ordained us to be perfectly righteous and sinless, but on the contrary He has given us a life the meaning of which consists only in our liberating ourselves from our sins, and so *approaching* toward Him. And He has not destined us to be rich, diseaseless, and deathless, but has given us trials, in the form of poverty, disease, the death of our friends and of ourselves — for the very purpose of teaching us to center our lives not in wealth, health, and this temporary exist-

ence, but in serving Him. And He has given us foes not in order that we should desire their ruin, but that we should learn to overcome them by love. He has given us a law of such a nature that it is always well with us if we fulfil it.

So that we have no need to invent any special means of salvation, nor to ask God for anything. All that we require is given us, if only we follow the instructions both of our conscience, and of God as expressed in the Gospels.

The third deceit, an especially pernicious one, consists in this, that the people who have come to believe that they cannot fulfil the will of God and live well by their own efforts, cease to labor at self-improvement; and not only this, but they lose the possibility of self-perfection. A man need only persuade himself that he cannot do something he has to do, and his hands become helpless, and he will indeed be unable to do what is necessary. A man need only become persuaded that he is ill, and he will be ill. Hysterical subjects feel impelled to scream because they believe they are forced to scream. Habitual drunkards do not recover, because they are persuaded they cannot abstain. There is no more immoral and pernicious teaching than that man cannot perfect himself by his own efforts.

This argument, that for a good Christian life one's own efforts are insufficient, and that some kind of external power is necessary, is like the assertion that reason is not sufficient to obtain knowledge of the truth, but that external indubitable proofs are necessary, which I mentioned in my first letter. In the former case, it is supposed beforehand that something or other exists which will give man the power to live a Christian life and to fulfil the will of God. In the latter case, it is supposed that something exists by which a man can ascertain positively that that which he is told is the absolute truth. It is supposed that some kind of means exists for ascertaining truth, independently of one's personal exertions of reason, and that, complete and absolute truth. But this is as impossible as it is to see the

light without eyes. Truth is ascertained by effort, and cannot be ascertained by any other means. And truth ascertained by man's reason can never be perfect, but only more or less approximate to absolute truth. So that "truth" may be the highest truth accessible to man at a given time, but it can never be absolute and positive truth for all times. No proposition can be an absolute truth for all time, were it only for this, that the life of all mankind, as well as that of individual man, is engaged in, and even consists of, the attainment of more and more perfect truth.

The erroneous and absurd idea that human reason cannot by its own efforts *approach* the Truth, proceeds from the same kind of terrible superstition as the one which asserts that man cannot approach the fulfilment of the will of God without external help. The essence of this superstition consists in the supposition that the complete, perfect truth has presumably been revealed by God Himself: to the Jews it was revealed on Mount Sinai, and then by various prophets; to Christians — by Christ, the Apostles, the Councils, the Church; to the Brahmans, in the Vedas; to the Buddhists, in the Tripitaka; to the Mohammedans, in the Koran.

This superstition is evil, firstly, because it distorts the very idea of truth; secondly, because once one has admitted as positive truth all the absurdities and horrors which are accepted as the revelation of God in the Scriptures, one has to keep on distorting common sense more and more in order to justify all these horrors and absurdities; and thirdly, because having accepted an infallible, external revelation as the source of truth, man ceases to believe in the only means to the knowledge of truth — the exertions of his reason. The man who acts thus is like one who, in search of a road, shuts his eyes and surrenders to the guidance of the first stranger who offers to show him the way, instead of exerting himself to the utmost to find it.

It is said, "How can one believe in reason when we see that people who are guided by it fall into error? Protestants, guided by reason, split up into numberless

faiths, and even one and the same man, trusting himself to reason, passes from one teaching to another. Therefore," it is said, "reason may be mistaken, and one cannot trust it."

But why so? When man believed in one Something, and his reason pointed out nothing more true, he was conscious of the highest truth accessible to him, and was right. Then he became conscious of a higher truth, and was right in acknowledging IT. So also was he right when he became conscious of a yet higher and purer truth. The highest, clearest, truest, which man can see and contemplate, that is for him the Truth.

It may be well and desirable, very possibly, that all men should suddenly recognize one and the same Perfect Truth (although if this were so life would cease), but even were we to admit that this might be desirable, — things do not occur as we would like. It might be very desirable (to unreasonable people) that man should not suffer sicknesses, or that some means should exist which should cure him from all diseases; or that all men should speak the same tongue. But this will not take place merely because we imagine that all men can be cured by our remedy, or that all men can speak and understand Russian. If we do imagine this we only make things worse for ourselves, just as we only make it worse for ourselves when we imagine that the complete and eternal Truth is revealed to us in the Scriptures, in tradition, or in the Church.

This might have been imagined at the beginning of Christianity, when one faith appeared possible; but in our time, when by our sides we can see people of the most various religions all imagining that the complete and eternal Truth is revealed to them and not to us — to imagine that precisely we, who have been born in our faith, possess the complete Truth, as the Buddhists, Mohammedans, Catholics, Taoists, and others imagine — is especially foolish.

So mistaken an idea is especially harmful, because it disunites men more than anything else. Men ought to go on uniting closer and closer, as Jesus teaches, and as

our reason and heart indicate. But dogmas about "revelations" *disunite* men more and more.

Besides this, one should understand also that if man believes in revelation he believes so only because reason has told him that he should believe in such or such a revelation — the Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Christian. Whether we desire it or not, no truth can enter man's mind independently of his reason. Reason is like the sieves attached to the threshing machines, so that one cannot get the grain otherwise than through the sieve. It may be that chaff has passed and still passes through the sieve, but there is no other way of getting the grain. And if we imagine that we can have pure grain without sifting, then we deceive ourselves, and fill ourselves with chaff instead of bread, as Churchmen do.

So that we should not imagine everything is happening as we would like, but remember that everything follows laws established by God. And human life has been so ordained by God that men cannot grasp the whole truth, but are continually approaching it; and by comprehending it more and more clearly they are mutually more and more being drawn together.

You ask my opinion about the person of Jesus; whether I regard him as God; about his birth; about future life; about whom I understand by Scribes and Pharisees; and about the holy communion.

I regard Jesus as the same kind of man we all are, and I believe it to be the greatest sacrilege and an evident proof of heathenism, to regard him as God. To consider Jesus as God is to renounce God.

Jesus I regard as man, but his teaching I regard as Divine, in so far as it expresses Divine truths. I know no higher teaching. It has given me life, and I try as far as I can to follow it.

About the birth of Jesus I know nothing, nor do I need to know.

About future life we know that it does exist, that life does not end with death. As to what that life will be it is not given us to know, because it is not necessary to us.

By Pharisees I mean principally the priesthood. By Scribes I mean men of science who do not believe in God.

Concerning the eating of the body and the drinking of the blood, I think this passage in the Gospel the least important, and that it signifies either imbibing the teaching, or a commemoration, but that neither in the one case nor the other has it any importance; nor does it signify what the Church fanatics understand by it. I have expressed my understanding of this passage as well as I could in the "Short Exposition of the Gospels" (*Gospel in Brief*).

III. — PRAYER

In my last letter I wrote about the futility of prayer, in respect both to the realization of our desires concerning events of the external world, and also to the inner world, for perfecting oneself.

I am afraid that owing to my own fault you will not understand me as I would wish, and I will add here, therefore, some thoughts on the subject of prayer.

One cannot pray for external events, such as that it might rain, or that an individual loved by me might remain alive, or that I should keep healthy and not die, for these events occur according to laws established by God once for all, and so established that if we act as we should they are always beneficial. It is just the same as if a good man has built a house with substantial walls and roof, which shelter me, and I capriciously desire to enlarge or alter the position of the walls, and ask for this.

As to one's inner perfection, one cannot pray for this, because everything necessary for it has been given us and it is neither possible nor needful to add anything more.

But because petitionary prayer has no meaning, it does not follow that one cannot or should not pray. On the contrary, I believe it is impossible to live well

without prayer, and that prayer is the necessary condition of a good, peaceful, and happy life. The Gospels indicate how one should pray, and what prayer should consist of.

In every man there is the divine spark, the Spirit of God. Every man is the son of God. Prayer consists in calling forth in oneself the divine element while renouncing all that is of this world, all which can distract one's feelings. (Mohammedans do very well when they shut their eyes and ears with their fingers on entering their mosques or beginning to pray.) The best method is the one Jesus teaches: to enter alone into one's chamber and lock the door; *i.e.*, to pray in complete solitude, whether in a room, a wood, or a field.

Prayer consists in renouncing all that is of this world, external, and evoking in oneself the divine part of one's soul by throwing oneself into it, entering by it communion with Him of whom It is a part; recognizing oneself as the slave of God; and testing oneself, one's actions, one's desires, according to the demands not of the external circumstances of the world but of this divine part of one's soul.

And such prayer is not an idle sentimentality and excitement, such as is produced by public prayer with its accompaniments of singing, images, illuminations, and exhortations — but is always a help to life, reforming and directing it.

Such a prayer is a confession, a test of one's past actions, and an indication of the direction of one's future actions. Suppose I have been insulted and have an ill-feeling toward the man, and desire evil to him, or do not wish to do him the good I could; or else suppose I have lost my property, or a dear one; or am living and acting not in accordance with my faith. If I do not pray in the right way, but continue to live superficially, I shall not be delivered from the painful feeling of ill-will to the one who has insulted me. So also the loss of property or of the dear one will poison my life. And preparing to act contrary to the demands of my conscience, I shall

feel uneasy. But if I test myself before my soul and before God, all will change. I shall condemn *myself*, not my enemy, and shall search for an opportunity of doing good to him; my losses I shall accept as a trial, and try to bear submissively. And thus I shall find consolation, and shall see my way clearer for my actions; shall not, as before, conceal from myself the inconsistency between my life and my faith, but shall endeavor with repentance to bring them into harmony; and in this effort I shall find peace and joy.

But, you ask, in what should prayer consist? Jesus has given us a model prayer in "Our Father," and this prayer, reminding us of the essence of our life (which consists in being in accordance with the will of the Father and obeying it), and of our most usual sins: condemnation, or not forgiving one's brothers; and above all, of the dangers or snares of our lives — this remains until the present time the best prayer, and the most complete, of all which I know.

But besides this prayer, true solitary prayer also consists of all which in the words of other wise and righteous men, or in one's own, brings the soul back to the consciousness of its divine source, to a more vivid and clear expression of the demands of one's conscience, *i.e.*, of one's divine nature. Prayer is a test of one's present and past actions according to the highest demands of the soul.

So that I not only do not reject solitary prayer, which reëstablishes the divinity of the soul, but I regard it on the contrary as a necessary condition of spiritual (true) life. I reject petitionary prayer and public prayer with its singing, images, candles, and even theatricalities, as sacrilegious. I often wonder how this public and petitionary prayer can exist among men calling themselves Christians, when Jesus clearly and definitely said that one should pray in solitude, and that you should not ask for anything, because before you open your mouth "Your Father in heaven knoweth what ye need."

As to myself I will say — without at all thinking that this is good for all, and that all ought to do so — that I have long ago contracted the habit of praying in solitude every morning, and that this my daily prayer is as follows: —

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. And after this I add, from the Gospel of John: Thy name is love, God is love. He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. No man hath seen God anywhere, but if we love one another then He abides in us, and His love is fulfilled in us. If any man say "I love God" but hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? Brothers, let us love one another; love is from God, and every man that loveth is from God and knoweth God, because God is love.

Thy Kingdom Come. And I add: Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all the rest will be added unto you. The Kingdom of God is within you.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. And here I ask myself whether I really believe that I am in God and God in me? And do I believe that my life consists in increasing love in myself? I ask, do I remember that to-day I am alive, and to-morrow dead? Is it true that I do not wish to live for personal desires and human glory, but only for the fulfilment of the will of God? And I add the words of Jesus from the three Gospels: Not my will, but Thine; and not what I desire but what Thou desirest. And not as I desire but as Thou desirest.

Give us this day our daily bread. I add: My food consists in doing the will of Him that sent me, and completing it. Deny thyself, take up thy cross for each day, and follow me. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find peace for your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin

against us. I add: And your Father will not forgive you your sins unless each one of you forgive his brother who has sinned against him.

And lead us not into temptation. I add: Beware of the temptations of the flesh, of ambition, of ill-will, of gluttony, adultery, human glory. Do not give your alms before men, but so that your right hand does not know what your left is doing. And he is not meet for the kingdom of God who having taken the plow looks back. Rejoice when thou art abused and humiliated.

But deliver us from evil. I add: Beware of what issues from the heart: evil thoughts, murders (every ill-will toward men), thefts (profiting by what one has not earned), adultery (even in thought), false witness, slander.

I conclude the prayer again with the words of the Gospel of John: "And we know that we have passed from death into life if we love our brother. He that loveth not his brother has not eternal life abiding in him."

So do I daily pray, adapting the words of this prayer to my actions and my spiritual state.

But besides this prayer I pray when I am alone with myself. I read the thoughts of wise and righteous men, not only Christian and not only ancient; and reflect, searching out before God the evil in my heart, and trying to extract it. I also endeavor to pray during the daily round of my life when I am with men, and passions are getting hold of me. It is in these cases I try to recall to mind all that took place in my soul during my solitary prayer; and the more sincere that prayer was, the easier it is to refrain from evil.

This is all I wished to tell you about prayer, in order that you should not think I reject it.

To a Member of a Russian Provincial School Board

(*June* 20, 1900)

When I taught in schools I had not then elucidated my relation to the teaching of the Church, but not attributing importance to this I avoided speaking of it to the pupils and instead read to them the Bible narratives and the Gospels, directing their attention chiefly to the moral teaching, and always answering sincerely the questions put to me.

If I was asked about the miracles I said that I did not believe in them.

But at the present time, having suffered much in the search for truth and guidance in life, I have come to the conviction that our Church teaching is an unscrupulous and pernicious falsehood and that instructing children in it is the greatest of crimes.

To tell a child who comes to me, an old man, in its search for help and indication as to how it should understand its life, the Source of life, and its relation to this Source and to the Universe, — to tell this child that God created the world and Adam in six days six thousand years ago and then rested, and that Adam sinned, and that in order to mend matters it was necessary to send God's Son into the world so that he could be killed; to tell him all those terrible blasphemous assertions of the Church which definitely destroy in the child all possibility of a conception of God as the Spirit of Love and Source of Life and instil into him horrible ideas of vengeance, temptation, reward, punishment, of the impossibility of improving oneself by one's own efforts, and all the other Church falsehoods which seem to be purposely invented to deprave the child's pure mind and heart, — to say this to a child inquiring for the truth is a most terrible crime, worse than physical violation. Thus I now look upon the teaching of the Church doctrine.

But notwithstanding my complete conviction of this

I would even now refrain, if I were a teacher, from imparting this conviction to the children, out of respect for their liberty and that of their parents, who regard this falsehood as sacred truth. But although I would avoid direct allusion to this, as formerly, every time the children appealed to me with the question I would quite truthfully tell them all I think about it.

And this is what I do at present with grown-up people and children.

Truth is always sacred. And nowhere is the transgression of its sanctity so criminal as in education: "God should be served in spirit and in truth," "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

So all I can say in answer to your question is: Regard it as your sacred duty always to speak the truth when answering the religious questions of pupils, and yet avoid thrusting any religious views upon them.

And if you yourself have not yet arrived at clear answers to the questions try to work them out, at first for yourself and then for them. And if you don't know, then say you do not know.

And this reply will be not only more fruitful than one gathered from the Catechism, but the reply "I do not know" will be sacred because it is true; whereas a reply from the Catechism will be a crime because it is the production of the Father of Lies, according to the word of the Gospel.

On the Religious Education of the Young

(1900)

From the time, twenty years ago, when I first clearly perceived how happily mankind should and might live, and how senselessly they torment themselves and ruin generation after generation, I have kept removing further and further back the fundamental cause of this folly and ruin.

At first, fallacious economic organizations appeared

to be the cause; then State coercion, which upholds these organizations; whereas I have now come to the conviction that the fundamental cause of it all is the erroneous religious teaching transmitted by education.

We have become so accustomed to the religious lie that surrounds us that we do not notice all the atrocity, stupidity, and cruelty with which the theology of the Orthodox Church is permeated. *We* do not notice it, but children do, and their souls are irreparably maimed by this teaching. We have but clearly to understand what we are really doing, when we teach children this so-called religion, in order to be appalled by the dreadful crime thus perpetrated.

A pure, innocent, and as yet undeceived and undeceiving child comes to you, to one who has experience of life, and who possesses, or might possess, all the knowledge now accessible to mankind — and inquires about those fundamental truths by which man should be guided in life. And how do we answer him? Very often, indeed, we do not answer but anticipate his questions, so that he may be provided with an incited answer ready for the time when his question arises.

We answer his question with a coarse, incoherent, stupid, and, above all, cruel Jewish legend, which we repeat either in its original form or, worse still, in our own words. We tell him — assuring him that this is the sacred truth — something which, as we are well aware, is impossible, and has for us no meaning: that six thousand years ago some strange being, which we call God, bethought itself of creating a world, and created it and man; man sinned, and for this the cruel God punished him and all of us, and then redeemed us from Himself by the death of His Son, also God; and that our chief object is to propitiate this God and liberate ourselves from the sufferings to which He has condemned us.

We imagine that there is no harm in this, and even that it is useful to the child; and we listen with pleasure as he repeats all these horrors, and do not realize the dreadful distortion — imperceptible to us because it is

spiritual — that is thereby taking place in the child's soul. We think that the soul of a child is a clear board on which we may write all we choose.

But this is not the case. The child has a vague idea of that Source of all, that cause of his existence, that force in whose power he finds himself, and he possesses the elevated idea of this source — indefinite and inexpressible in words, but of which his whole being is conscious — natural to all rational men. And suddenly, instead of this, he is told that this source is naught else than some sort of personal, self-willed, and dreadful evil being — the Jewish God.

The child has a vague, but correct, idea of the object of this life, which he sees is happiness, to be attained by loving communion among men. Instead of this, he is told that the general object of life is the caprice of a whimsical God, and that the personal aim of each individual is the liberation of himself from eternal punishment — sufferings earned by some one, which God has laid upon all.

Every child also has the consciousness that the duties of man lie in the region of morality. Instead of this, he is told that his duties consist principally in blind faith, in prayers, — the uttering of certain words at certain hours, — and in swallowing a decoction of bread and wine meant to represent the flesh and blood of God; to say nothing of *ikons*, miracles, immoral Bible stories — given as examples of conduct — and the Gospel miracles, with all the immoral meaning that has been attached to the Gospel narrative. Just as though, from the cycle of folklore about various mythical heroes, some one were to construct a complete teaching of life, and were to present this to children as rational history.

It seems unimportant to us, and yet the teaching to children of this so-called religion which is taking place among us is the most dreadful crime we can possibly imagine. Torture, murder, the violation of children, are nothing in comparison with this crime.

The Government, the ruling classes, those in power, stand in need of this fraud; their power is inseparably

united with it; consequently the ruling classes always insist on this fraud being imposed upon children, and maintained in grown-up people by strenuous hypnotism. Whereas those who desire, not the maintenance of the present false social organization, but, on the contrary, its reform, and, above all, those who desire the welfare of the children with whom they come in contact, should endeavor with all their might to deliver children from this dreadful fraud.

Therefore the utter indifference of the young to religious questions, and the negation of all religious forms, even though not replaced by any positive religious instruction, is still incomparably better than the Judaico-ecclesiastical theology, be it in ever so perfected a form.

It appears to me that for any one who has once understood the significance of imparting false teaching as sacred truth there can be no question as to what he should do, even though he possess no positive religious convictions to transmit to the child. If I know that a deception is a deception, then under no possible circumstances may I tell a child, who guilelessly, trustfully questions me, that a deceit, evident to me, is the sacred truth. It would be better if I could answer truthfully all those questions that are so untruthfully answered by the Church. But, if I cannot do this, still I must avoid giving out as truth an evident lie, knowing indubitably that from adherence to truth nothing but good can result. Besides, it is not true that a man can be without anything to say to a child in the way of the positive religious truth professed by him. Every sincere man knows *that* good principle for which he lives. Let him communicate that to the child, or let him demonstrate it to him, and he will do good to the child, and will certainly not injure it.

I have written a book called "The Christian Teaching,"[1] in which I desired to express as simply and clearly as possible what it is I believe. The book has turned out to be unsuitable for children, though it was precisely

[1] To be had of THE FREE AGE PRESS, post free, 1½d.; 64 pp.

children I had in view when I wrote it. If I now had to transmit to a child the substance of the religious teaching I consider true, I should say to him: that we have come into this world and live in it, not according to our own will, but according to the will of that which we call God, and that it is well with us, therefore, only when we fulfil this will. This will is, that we should all be happy; and for all to be happy there is but one means: each must act toward others as he would wish that they should act toward him.

As to the questions about how the world came into existence, and what awaits us after death, I would answer to the first by the acknowledgment of my ignorance, and of the anomaly of such a question (in the Buddhist world no such question exists); and to the second I would answer by the conjecture that the will of Him who called us into this life for our welfare leads us somewhere through death — probably for the same purpose.

To a Private Friend, on Suicide

(1898)

The question, "Has a man in general the right to kill himself?" is incorrectly put. There can be no question of "right." If he is able to do it, then he has the right. I think that the possibility of killing oneself is a safety-valve. Having it, man has no right (here the expression "right" is appropriate) to say that life is unbearable. If it were impossible to live, then one would kill oneself; and consequently one cannot speak of life as being unbearable. The possibility of killing himself has been given to man, and therefore he may (he has the right to) kill himself, and he continually uses this right — when he kills himself in duels, in war, by dissipation, wine, tobacco, opium, etc. The question can only be as to whether it is reasonable and moral (the reasonable and moral always coincide) to kill one-

self. No, it is unreasonable; as unreasonable as to cut off the shoots of a plant which one wishes to destroy: it will not die, but will merely grow irregularly.

Life is indestructible; it is beyond time and space, therefore death can only change its form, arrest its manifestation in this world. But having arrested it in this world, I, firstly, do not know whether its manifestation in another world will be more pleasant to me; and, secondly, I deprive myself of the possibility of experiencing and acquiring by my *ego* all that could be acquired in this world. Besides this, and above all, it is unreasonable because, by arresting my life owing to its apparent unpleasantness, I hereby show that I have a perverted idea of the object of my life, assuming that its object is my pleasure; whereas its object is, on the one hand, personal perfection, and, on the other, the service of that work which is being accomplished by the whole life of the Universe. It is for the same reason that suicide is also immoral. Life in its entirety, and the possibility of living until natural death, have been given to man only on the condition that he serve the life of the Universe. But, having profited by life so long as it was pleasant, he refuses to serve the Universe as soon as life becomes unpleasant; whereas, in all probability, his service commenced precisely when life began to appear unpleasant. All work appears at first unpleasant.

In the Optin Monastery, for more than thirty years, there lay on the floor a monk smitten with paralysis, who had the use of his left hand only. The doctors said that he was sure to suffer much, but not only did he refrain from complaining of his position, but incessantly making the sign of the cross, and looking at the *ikons*, he smilingly expressed his gratitude to God and joy in that spark of life which flickered in him. Tens of thousands of visitors came to see him; and it is difficult to imagine all the good which flowed into the world through this man, though deprived of the possibility of any activity. Certainly he did more good than thousands and thousands of healthy people who

imagine that in various institutions they are serving the world.

While there is life in man he can perfect himself, and serve the Universe. But he can serve the Universe only by perfecting himself, and perfect himself only by serving the Universe.

To the Russian Ministers of the Interior and of Justice

(*April* 20, 1896)

Dear Sir, — I address you as man to man, with feelings of respect and good-will, in which feelings I beg you also to accept my letter. Only with sincere feelings of this kind are mutual understanding and agreement possible. The matter about which I write concerns the persecutions endured at the hands of the officials of your Department by those persons who possess certain writings of mine which are prohibited in Russia, and lend them to others who desire to read them. As far as I know many different persons have been subjected to such persecutions. One of the last cases was that of a woman doctor of Tula, Miss N——, who was searched, put into prison, and is now being cross-examined by the Public Prosecutor, accused of spreading my writings.

This case of Miss N——, a woman no longer young, of weak health, exceedingly nervous, highly respected for her fine nature, and who has gained the universal love of all who know her, is especially striking. The occasion arose from the following circumstance: Miss N—— is well known to me and is a friend of my daughter. A workman in Tula had written to me several times asking for the loan of my book, "What I Believe." Not having a copy at my disposal and not knowing the man, I left several of his letters without answering. But having again received a letter from him this winter with the same request, I transmitted it to my daughter, asking her to send him the book he

desired if she had it. My daughter not having a copy, but remembering that in the same town (Tula) from which he wrote Miss N—— was living, who possessed some of my prohibited writings, she sent her card to the applicant, requesting that a copy of one of these books should be given to the bearer on presentation to Miss N——. This card, which was discovered, served as the occasion for the arrest of Miss N——, and of all the persecutions to which she was submitted.

I think that measures of this kind are unreasonable, useless, cruel, and above all unjust. They are unreasonable because there neither is nor can be any reason why Miss N—— was alone chosen as a victim out of those thousands of people who have my prohibited writings and lend them. They are useless because they do not attain any end; they do not succeed in checking anything, as the evil they are supposed to check continues amongst thousands of people, all of whom it is not possible to arrest and keep in prisons. They are cruel, because for many weak and nervous individuals, such as Miss N——, police raids, cross-examinations, and especially imprisonment may be the causes of severe nervous complaints (which was the case with Miss N——), and even of death. But, above all, these measures are in the highest degree unjust because they are not directed against the person from whom emanates the activity which the Government regards as evil.

In the present case I am this person. I write these books, and in personal intercourse spread those views which the Government regards as evil; and therefore if the Government desires to counteract the development of this evil, it should direct against me all the measures it now applies against those who casually come under its influence, and who are to blame only because they possess the prohibited books which interest them and lend them to their acquaintances. The Government should act thus for this reason also, that I not only do not conceal this activity of mine, but categorically, by this very letter, declare that I wrote and circulated

those books which the Government regards as pernicious, and still continue to write and circulate in books and letters and conversations similar ideas to those expressed in the books.

The essence of these ideas is, that the unmistakable law of God has been revealed to men, that this law stands higher than all the human laws, and that, in accordance with this law, we should not be in enmity with nor coerce each other, but, on the contrary, should help each other — should act with others as we would wish others to act with us.

These are the thoughts, with the practical inferences they imply, which I have expressed as well as I could in my books and am now endeavoring to express yet more clearly and simply in the book I am now writing. I express the same thoughts in conversations, and in the letters I write to people I know and to those I do not know. I express the same thoughts to you now also, indicating the acts of cruelty and violence contrary to the law of God which are perpetrated by officials of your Department.

The words uttered by Gamaliel regarding the dissemination of the Christian teaching: "If this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" — these words constitute a lesson of *true* governmental wisdom in its relations to the manifestations of spiritual activity of men. If this activity be false it will fall of itself, whereas if it contains the work of God — such as the work of God in our age, that is the substitution of the principle of rational love in the place of violence — then no external efforts can either hasten or retard its fulfilment. If the Government allows the unchecked dissemination of these views they will spread slowly and equably; if the Government, as it does now, subjects to persecution those who have accepted these thoughts and are transmitting them to others, then the dissemination will diminish among timid, weak, and hesitating people precisely to the degree in which it will augment among strong, energetic, and convinced people.

And therefore the process of the dissemination of the work will not stop, and will be neither retarded nor hastened by any means the Government adopts.

This, in my opinion, is the general and immutable law of the spreading of truth, and therefore the wisest thing the Government can do in its relation to the expression of ideas it regards as undesirable, consists in undertaking nothing, and especially in not employing such unworthy, cruel, and obviously unjust measures as the torture of innocent people because they do things which have been done by tens of thousands of other men whom no one persecutes for this.

If, however, the Government wishes at all costs not to remain inactive, but to punish, threaten, and suppress that which it regards as evil, then the least irrational and the least unjust course it could take would be to direct all measures of punishment, intimidation, and suppression against that which the Government regards as the source of the evil, *i.e.*, against me; the more so as I declare beforehand that I will, unceasingly, until my death, continue to do that which the Government regards as evil, and which I regard as my sacred duty before God.

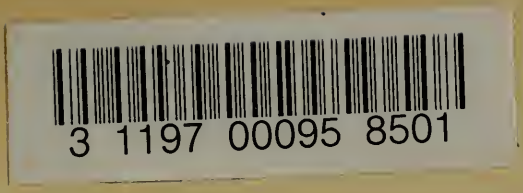
And please do not think that in asking you to direct against me the measures used against some of my acquaintances I imagine that their application to me would create any kind of difficulty to the Government — that my popularity or my social position protects me from police raids, cross-examinations, exile, imprisonment, and other severer acts of violence. I not only do not think so, but am persuaded that if the Government were to act vigorously with me, to exile me, imprison me, or apply a yet more extreme measure, this would not create any particular difficulty, and that public opinion would not only not be revolted, but the majority would completely approve of such action, and say that it should have been done long ago.

God is my witness that in writing this letter I am not surrendering to a desire for bravado, or to show off in some way, but am prompted by a moral demand, which

consists in relieving innocent people of responsibility for actions committed by me; and, above all, of indicating to the representatives of the Government, and to you in their number, the cruelty, unreasonableness, and injustice of the measures you use, and of asking you, as far as possible, to cease them, and to free yourself from the moral responsibility they involve.

I should be very glad if you were to answer me in a simple unofficial letter as to your thoughts about what I have expressed, and whether you will fulfil my request to transfer for the future all persecutions, if so it be they are regarded as necessary, to me, the principal person from the governmental point of view who deserves them.

With the feeling of true good-will, I remain, — Yours respectfully.



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